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as a token of respect
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THE WIDOW AND CHILDREN OF HIS FRIEND

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The Bishop was much struck with the situation and beauty of the Church of St. George, at Madras, standing, as he expressed it, "embosomed in palms." As he intended taking a sketch of it on his return from his southern visitation, for the frontispiece of a volume of Indian Sermons, the editor, before she left Calcutta, requested a friend to procure her an accurate drawing of the building, which she has prefixed to the present series.

The Address on Confirmation will be read with melancholy interest, from the circumstance of its delivery having been the concluding act of her husband's public life; in less than two hours after he had thus earnestly exhorted his congregation, he was summoned to meet his Saviour!

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASVATI MAHAL

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OF THE

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,

DELIVERED BY THE

LORD BISHOP OF BRISTOL,

AT A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY,

JUNE XIII. M.DCCC.XXIII.

TO THE

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The Very Rev. Robert Hodgson, D.D. Dean of Carlisle,

Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, Bart. M.P.

Sir R. H. Inglis, Bart.

Ven. Joseph Holden Pott, M.A. Archdeacon of London,

Ven. John James Watson, D.D. Archdeacon of St. Albans,

Ven. Charles James Blomfield, D.D. Archdeacon of Colchester,

Ven. Robert Nares, M.A. Archdeacon of Stafford,

Ven. Francis Wrangham, M.A. Archdeacon of Cleveland,

Ven. William Strong, D.D. Archdeacon of Northampton,

The Hon. & Rev. George Neville Grenville, M.A. Master of Magdalen College, Cambridge.

And a large assemblage of Members of the Society.

At a Special General Meeting of the SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE, held at their House in Bartlett's-Buildings, June 13, 1823, agreeably to public notice:

PRESENT,

His Grace CHARLES MANNERS SUTTON, D.D. Lord Archbishop of CANTERBURY, President,
His Grace WILLIAM MAGEE, D.D. Lord Archbishop of DUBLIN,
The Right Rev. WILLIAM HOWLEY, D.D. Lord Bishop of LONDON,
The Right Rev. THOMAS BURGESS, D.D. Lord Bishop of ST. DAVID'S,
The Right Rev. GEORGE-HENRY LAW, D.D. Lord Bishop of CHESTER,
The Right Rev. WILLIAM VAN MILDERT, D.D. Lord Bishop of LLANDAFF,
The Right Rev. JOHN KAYE, D.D.Lord Bishop of BRISTOL,
The Right Rev. REGINALD HEBER, D.D. Lord Bishop of CALCUTTA,
The Right Honourable GEORGE, Lord KENYON,
The Right Honourable THOMAS, Lord LILFORD,
The Very Rev. ROBERT HODGSON, D.D. Dean of CARLISLE,
Sir THOMAS DYKE ACLAND, Bart. M.P.
Sir R. H. INGLIS, Bart.
Ven. JOSEPH HOLDEN POTT, M.A. Archdeacon of LONDON,
Ven. JOHN JAMES WATSON, D.D. Archdeacon of ST. ALBAN'S,
Ven. CHARLES JAMES BLOMFIELD, D.D. Archdeacon of COLCHESTER,
Ven. ROBERT NARES, M.A. Archdeacon of STAFFORD,
Ven. FRANCIS WRANGHAM, M.A. Archdeacon of CLEVELAND,
Ven. WILLIAM STRONG, D.D. Archdeacon of NORTHAMPTON,
The Hon. & Rev. GEORGE NEVILLE GRENVILLE, M.A. Master of MAGDALEN COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

And a large assemblage of MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY,

His Grace the President, in the Chair:

The following Valedictory Address to the Right Reverend Father in God Reginald, Lord Bishop of Calcutta, previous to his departure for India, was delivered, on the behalf of the Society, by the Right Reverend Father in God John, Lord Bishop of Bristol.

My Lord Bishop of Calcutta,

Your preparations for the arduous voyage which you are about to undertake, being now so far advanced towards their completion as to preclude the expectation that you will again, at least for a long series of years, be enabled to attend the meetings of this Society, it has been resolved, and all must admit the propriety and expediency of the resolution, that a Valedictory Address should be delivered to your Lordship on the present occasion. The highly responsible and honourable situation, which you have been recently appointed to fill, is intimately connected with objects, to which the attention of the Society has, for more than a century, been directed. They would, therefore, subject themselves to a charge—of all others most abhorrent from their real character and feelings—a charge of indifference and inattention to the spiritual welfare of the inhabitants of Hindostan, did they not seize the opportunity, before your depar-

ture for those distant regions, of publicly expressing the deep, the intense interest, which they take in the success of your future labours.

But while I acknowledge the peculiar propriety of the resolution, I must be permitted to state my unfeigned regret that its execution has not been entrusted to abler hands. When it was proposed to me to undertake the office of delivering the present address, I was not insensible to the difficulty of the task in which I was about to engage. Every approach which I have since made to the subject, has confirmed me in the conviction of my inability to do it justice—to produce any thing which should not be alike unworthy of your Lordship's distinguished reputation, and of the reasonable expectation of the audience by which I am surrounded.

Happily, however, for me it is not requisite that I should enter upon the various important and interesting topics, which the occasion unavoidably suggests. In contemplating your elevation to the episcopal office, it is impossible to separate that event from the influence which it must necessarily have upon the spiritual interests of the subjects of our Indian empire; of an empire scarcely inferior in extent to that of Rome in the plenitude of her power, and containing millions of our fellow-creatures, who are yet strangers to the saving truths of the Gospel. How grand, how overwhelming a subject is here presented to the contemplation! A subject, in which the most exalted intellect may find a fit opportunity for the display of all its

powers; but from which ordinary minds must shrink, oppressed by the humiliating consciousness of their own insufficiency! Great, therefore, is the relief which I have derived from the reflection, that the design of the present address neither requires, nor even permits, me to expatiate in this ample field. It would be no less presumptuous in me, than foreign from the intention of the Society, were I to occupy your time and that of this meeting in detailing my own opinions respecting the most effectual mode of communicating the blessings of Christianity to the nations of Hindostan, or in offering your Lordship my advice respecting the course which it is expedient for you to pursue in discharging the duties of your high station. My province is simply to express to you the feelings with which the Society regard your appointment to the superintendance of the Indian Diocese, and to bespeak your protection and support for the efforts which they have long made, and, with the blessing of Providence, shall never cease to make, to diffuse the knowledge of the Gospel throughout that vast continent.

Yet, I trust that you, my Right Reverend Brother, and that the rest of this respectable assembly will not charge me with improperly digressing from the immediate business of the day, if I briefly advert to the change which has been effected in the prospects of the Society, since a similar address was delivered in this place. Strongly as the Society were impressed with the conviction that the forma-

tion of a Church Establishment afforded the only secure mode of communicating the blessings of Christianity to our Eastern Empire—firm and deeply-rooted as was their confidence in the zeal, the discretion, the ability of him to whom the government of that Establishment was to be committed—they were, still, too sensible how short-sighted are the views of man, and how frail the nature of all his expectations, not to feel some anxiety and apprehension respecting the success of the newly-adopted measures.

Nine years have now elapsed since your lamented Predecessor entered upon the discharge of his episcopal functions; and that, which then could only afford a subject for conjecture and for hope, has become a matter of retrospect and of certainty. All the accounts which have reached the Society, concur in stating that the new measures have been attended with more complete success than from the shortness of time, during which they have been in operation, the most sanguine could have ventured to anticipate. Many of the impediments which directly or indirectly, retarded the reception of the Gospel, have been removed. The establishment of a visible Church has opened an asylum to the convert from the taunts and injuries of the professors of his former faith. The progressive improvement effected in the lives and conversation of the European settlers has deprived the natives of one of their most powerful arguments against the truth of Christianity. They no longer look upon us as mere

conquerors, greedy only of wealth and of dominion; but as a virtuous and religious people, not less superior to them in moral goodness than in civilization and manners—in justice and benevolence than in arts and arms. Their attachment to their caste, which seemed to present the most formidable obstacle to their conversion, has been overcome. The mists, which enveloped their understandings, are fast dissolving before the irradiating influence of Sacred Truth. The superstitious dread, with which they regarded their deities, is giving place to juster conceptions of the Divine Nature; and the priests of the idol of Juggernaut are compelled to bewail the decreasing numbers and diminished zeal of his votaries.

What a variety of emotions is the cheering prospect which has at length opened upon us, calculated to excite! What gratitude to Almighty God for the blessing which He has been pleased to bestow upon the labours of the infant Church! What reverence for the memory of the distinguished Prelate, whose wisdom and piety have, under the direction of Providence, conducted those labours to so successful an issue! How powerful an encouragement does it hold out, how strict an obligation does it impose, stedfastly to persevere in the prosecution of these holy designs, till the triumph over the powers of darkness in our Indian empire shall be complete, and no other vestige of the ancient idolatry shall remain than the deserted temples of the divinities, who were its objects. Nothing now

appears to be wanting but that the number of labourers should bear a due proportion to the abundance of the harvest which is spread before them; and our confidence in the enlightened piety of our rulers forbids the supposition, that this want will long remain unsupplied. But, I must no longer detain you from the immediate business of the day.

My Lord, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge desire to offer to your Lordship their sincere congratulations upon your elevation to the Episcopal See of Calcutta.

They derive from your appointment to this high office the certain assurance, that all the advantages, which they have anticipated from the formation of a Church Establishment in India, will be realized; and that the various plans for the diffusion of true religion amongst its inhabitants, which have been so wisely laid and so auspiciously commenced by your lamented Predecessor, will, under your superintendance and controul, advance with a steady and uninterrupted progress. They ground this assurance upon the rare union of intellectual and moral qualities, which combine to form your character. They ground it upon the stedfastness of purpose, with which, from the period of your admission into the ministry, you have exclusively dedicated your time and talents to the peculiar studies of your sacred profession; abandoning that human learning, in which you had already shown that you were capable of attaining the highest excellence, and re-

nouncing the certain prospect of literary fame. But above all, they ground this assurance upon the signal proof of self-devotion, which you have given by your acceptance of the episcopal office. With respect to any other individual, who had been placed at the head of the Church Establishment in India, a suspicion might have been entertained that some worldly desire, some feeling of ambition mingled itself with the motives by which he was actuated. But in your case such a suspicion would be destitute even of the semblance of truth. Every enjoyment, which a well-regulated mind can derive from the possession of wealth, was placed within your reach. Every avenue to professional distinction and dignity, if they had been the objects of your solicitude, lay open before you. What then was the motive which could incline you to quit your native land? To exchange the delights of home for a tedious voyage to distant regions? To separate yourself from the friends, with whom you had conversed from your earliest years? What, but an ardent wish to become the instrument of good to others? A holy zeal in your Master's service? A firm persuasion that it was your bounden duty to submit yourself unreservedly to His disposal—to shrink from no labour which He might impose—to count no sacrifice hard which He might require? Of the benefits, which will arise to the Indian Church from a spirit of self-devotion so pure and so disinterested, the Society feel, that it is impossible to form an exaggerated estimate.

Nor has this act of self-devotion been the result of sudden impulse; it has been performed after serious reflection, and with an accurate knowledge of the difficulties by which your path will be obstructed. You have not engaged in this holy warfare without previously counting the cost. So deeply were you impressed with the responsibility, which must attach to the episcopal office in India, that you hesitated to accept it. With that diffidence, which is the surest characteristic of great talents and great virtues, you doubted your own sufficiency. But upon mature deliberation you felt, that a call was made upon you: a call—to disobey which would argue a culpable distrust of the protection of Him who made it. You assured yourself that the requisite strength would be supplied by the same Almighty Power, which imposed the burthen. Amongst the circumstances which have attended your recent appointment, the Society dwell upon this with peculiar satisfaction; inasmuch as it forms a striking feature of resemblance between your Lordship and your lamented Predecessor; who, like you, originally felt, and like you, subsequently overcame a reluctance to undertake the administration of the Indian Diocese.

Before that accomplished Prelate quitted his native shores, which he was, alas! destined never to revisit, this Society in a valedictory address entreated him to honour with his countenance and protection their exertions for the propagation and maintenance of the Christian Religion in the East.

They stated their exertions to consist in sending out missionaries; in procuring translations into the dialects of Hindostan of the Scriptures and the Liturgy of our Church, and distributing them throughout the country; and in encouraging the erection of schools for the instruction of children as well of Europeans as of natives. They further invited his attention to the formation of Institutions in imitation of the Diocesan and District Committees, which had about that period been established in different parts of England and Wales.

In the designs recommended to his notice by the Society your lamented Predecessor was pleased to promise his cordial co-operation. Under his fostering care committees were formed in the three Presidencies and in Ceylon, from the labours of which the most beneficial results have arisen. The limits which the Society must prescribe to themselves in the present address, will not allow them to enter into a minute detail of their results. Yet they cannot deny themselves the gratification of particularly referring to the re-establishment of the Vepery Mission Press through the interposition of the Madras Committee; a measure fraught with the most important benefits to the cause of the Gospel, since it supplies the means of diffusing through the whole of Southern India the word of knowledge and of life.

The same countenance, with which your Predecessor honoured their past labours, the Society now entreat your Lordship to bestow upon their

future exertions. The nature of the objects to which those exertions are directed will, we are assured, of itself constitute, in your estimation, a sufficient title to your support. Yet we cannot but indulge the hope, that you will be induced to regard them with an eye of especial favour by the consideration that they proceed from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Though you have been precluded by the distance of your residence from the metropolis, and by more pressing avocations, from attending the meetings and taking an active part in the business of the Society, still ample proofs have not been wanting of your friendly disposition towards them. Your name has long been enrolled in the list of their members; and they feel both pleasure and gratitude, when they reflect that you condescended to close your ministerial labours in this country by a discourse delivered at their request, and, if they may be allowed to use the expression, in their service.

It now only remains to assure your Lordship, if such an assurance is indeed necessary, that in quitting your native land you bear with you the esteem and the regret of the Society. Though removed to a distant quarter of the globe, you will still be present to our thoughts. Every event which befalls you will be to us a subject of the liveliest interest: and with our prayers for the success of your public labours we shall mingle our petitions for your personal safety and welfare; humbly beseeching the Giver of all good gifts, that He will be

pleased to shower his choicest earthly blessings on your head, till He shall at length call you, in the fulness of age and honour, to receive that eternal reward which He has reserved in His heavenly kingdom for those, who are the instruments of "turning many unto righteousness."

To this Address the Lord Bishop of Calcutta made the following Reply:

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE AND MY LORDS, PARTICULARLY MY LORD BISHOP OF BRISTOL.

IT may be easily supposed that the present is to me a very aweful moment—both when I consider the persons, in whose presence I stand; the occasion, on which we have been called together; the charge, which I have just received; and the Society, on whose part those admirable and affectionate counsels have been addressed to me. I cannot recollect without very solemn and mingled feelings of gratitude for the trust which has been reposed in me, and of alarm for the responsibility which I have incurred, how much I have been honoured by the kindness and confidence of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and the remarkable and most honourable interest, which this Society has always evinced in the welfare of the Indian Church. I cannot forget, that it was this Society which administered the wants, and directed the energies of the first protestant missionaries to Hindostan; that, under

its auspices, at a later period, Schwartz, and Gerickè, and Kolhoff, went forth to sow the seeds of light and happiness in that benighted country; and that, still more recently, within these sacred walls, (for sacred I will venture to call them, when I consider the purposes, to which they are devoted, and the prayers, by which they are hallowed) Bishop Middleton bade adieu to that country, which he loved, and to that Church, of which he was one of the brightest ornaments. With such examples of learning and holiness around me, with such models of Christian zeal before me, I may well be acquitted of assumed humility, when I profess a deep and painful sense of my own insufficiency; and feel, that where so much has been done, and where so much remains to do, far greater energies and talents than mine will be necessary either to fulfil the reasonable expectations of the Christian world, or to avoid falling short, far short, of the achievements of my admirable Predecessor.

With such difficulties, and under such a responsibility my hope must be, and is, in the counsels and countenance of your Grace, and of the other distinguished Rulers of the English Church, whom I see around me; and it is therefore, that I could almost feel disposed to lament as a deficiency in the eloquent and pathetic Address of the Right Reverend Prelate, to whose kind notice of me I am so deeply indebted, that he has professedly waved all detailed explanation of his ideas respect-

ing that line of conduct, which, in my situation, is most likely to conduce to, and accelerate the triumph of the Gospel among the Heathen. I regret this the more, since, in a recent admirable sermon by the same distinguished person, he has shown us, how remarkably he is qualified to offer counsels of such a nature. Most gladly, I am convinced, we should all, and most gladly, above all, should I have become his scholar in the art of feeding the flock of Christ, and teaching and persuading the things, which belong to the kingdom of God. But, though his modesty has withheld him from the task, I will still hope to profit by his assistance in private, for the execution of that awful and overpowering enterprize, which, (if I know my own heart) I can truly say, I undertake not in my own strength, but in an humble reliance on the prayers and counsels of the good and the wise, and on that assistance, above all, which, whosoever seeks it faithfully, shall never fail of receiving.

Nor, my Lord Archbishop, will I seek to dissemble my conviction, that, slow as the growth of truth must be in a soil so strange and hitherto so spiritually barren; distant as the period may be when any very considerable proportion of the natives of India shall lift up their hands to the Lord of Hosts, yet, in the degree of progress which has been made, enough of promise is given to remove all despondency as to the eventual issue of our labours. When we recollect, that one hundred years have scarcely passed away, since the first missionaries

of this Society essayed, under every imaginable circumstance of difficulty and discouragement, to plant their grain of mustard-seed in the Carnatic; when we look back to those apostolic men with few resources, save what this Society supplied to them; without encouragement, without support; compelled to commit themselves, not to the casual hospitality, but to the systematic and bigoted inhospitality, of the natives; seated in the street, because no house would receive them; acquiring a new and difficult language, at the doors of the schools, from the children tracing their letters on the sand; can we refrain not only from admiring the faith and patience of those eminent Saints, but from comparing their situation with the port which Christianity now assumes in the East, and indulging the hope that, one century more, and the thousands of converts which our missionaries already number, may be extended into a mighty multitude, who will look back with gratitude to this Society as the first dispenser of those sacred truths which will then be their guide and their consolation? What would have been the feelings of Schwartz, ("clarum et venerabile nomen Gentibus;" to whom even the heathen, whom he failed to convince, looked up as something more than mortal,) what would have been his feeling had he lived to witness Christianity in India established under the protection of the ruling power, by whom four-fifths of that vast continent is held in willing subjection? What, if he had seen her adorned and strengthened by

that primitive and regular form of government, which is so essential to her reception and stability among a race like our eastern fellow-subjects! What forbids, I ask, that, when in one century, our little one is become a thousand, in a century more, that incipient desertion of the idol shrines, to which the learned Prelate so eloquently alluded, may have become total, and be succeeded by a resort of all ranks and ages to the altars of the Most High; so that a parochial Clergy may prosecute the work which the missionary has begun, and "the gleaning grapes of Ephraim may be more "than the vintage of Abiezer?"

There was one part of the Speech of my Right Reverend Friend, (if I may be allowed to call him so) which I cannot abstain, in gratitude, from noticing, though I confess, I allude to it with reluctance; I mean the obliging manner in which he has been pleased to speak of me. There is no man who knows better than myself, and this, my Lord, is no time for dissembling, how little these praises are deserved. Yet even these praises, by God's grace, I would hope may not be useless to me. They may teach me what manner of man the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge desires as her agent and correspondent in India; they may teach me what manner of man a Bishop of Calcutta ought to be, what manner of man Bishop Middleton was, and what manner of man, though at an humble distance, I must endeavour, by God's help, to become.

I can only conclude by expressing, so far as words can express, to your Grace, to the distinguished Prelates around you, and to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in general, my gratitude for the private and personal, as well as public kindness and countenance, with which you have honoured me; my gratitude, and that of the Indian Church, for the splendid bounty of which you have made me the dispenser; my gratitude for the patience and indulgence with which you have now heard me; my gratitude, above all, for those prayers which you have promised to offer up, on my behalf, to the throne of grace and mercy. Accept, in return, the blessing of a grateful heart; accept the settled purpose of my mind, to devote what little talent I possess, to the great cause in which all our hearts are engaged, and for which it is not our duty only, but our illustrious privilege to labour. Accept the hope, which I would fain express, that I shall not altogether disappoint your expectations, but that I shall learn and labour in the furtherance of that fabric of Christian wisdom, of which the superstructure was so happily commenced by him, whose loss we deplore! I say the superstructure, not the foundation, for this latter praise the glorified spirit of my revered Predecessor would himself be the first to disclaim. As a wise master-builder, he built on that which he found; but "other foundation can no man lay," nor did Bishop Middleton seek to lay any other than that, of which the first stone was laid in

Golgotha, and the building was complete when the Son of God took His seat of glory on the right hand of His Father.

I again, my Lord Archbishop, with much humility, request your blessing, and the prayers of the Society. It is, indeed, a high satisfaction for me to reflect, that I go forth as their agent, and the promoter of their pious designs in the East; and, if ever the time should arrive when I may be enabled to preach to the natives of India in their own language, I shall then aspire to the still higher distinction of being considered the MISSIONARY of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO

THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE

OF

INDIA,

AT

Calcutta, May 27, 1824; *at Bombay, April* 29, 1825; *at Colombo, September* 1, 1825; *and at Madras, March* 10, 1826.

Σπουδασω δε και εκαστοτε εχειν υμας μετα την εμην εξοδον την τουτων μνημην ποιεισθαι.—2 Peter i. 15.

ADVERTISEMENT,

PREFIXED TO THE CALCUTTA EDITION.

THE Right Reverend Author, after holding his visitation at Madras, delayed the publication of his charge till the completion of his extensive journey to the south should have enabled him to speak, from personal observation, of the actual state of the several missions in the diocese. In the course of his laborious visitation of the several provinces of Upper, Central, and Western India, and subsequently of the Island of Ceylon, his attention had been anxiously directed to these inquiries; and the last weeks of his invaluable life were devoted to the minute and careful survey of the more cultivated fields of missionary labour in the Peninsula. And though, amongst the many circumstances which render the untimely loss of such a man a source of universal sorrow to the Church of India, this may well have been overlooked; it is yet no slight subject of regret to the Christian world, that he whose mind was most capable of appreciating those important labours, whose opportunities were most favourable for observing them, and whose high and sacred dignity gave weight and authority to his testimony, should not have been spared to record more minutely the scenes of infant Christianity which he had himself witnessed, and to communicate to the hearts of others the impressions of delight and gratitude which they had left upon his own.

A

CHARGE.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

ADDRESSING you, for the first time, in your collective and corporate capacity, I am happy to be enabled to announce the probable increase of your numbers to an amount more nearly adequate to the spiritual necessities of India; to the arduous and peculiar labours which the Indian clergy undergo; to the casualties of an enfeebling and devouring climate, and to that fair proportion which might be looked for between the ecclesiastical establishments of Fort William and its subordinate Presidencies.

The number of chaplains allotted to the former is increased, by a recent order of the Honourable Court of Directors, from twenty-eight to thirty-one, while the transfer of Mhow and Nagpoor to the establishments of Fort St. George and Bombay will enable the government of this Presidency to avail itself, in other quarters, of the services of the clergymen who now officiate there; and the change, which is further directed, of "station" into "dis-

trict" chaplains, may lead, I trust, to measures still further increasing the effective nature of their ministerial labours.

For the munificent and parental care which has prompted these measures, it would ill become me to conceal the expression of my gratitude,—and it is in the hope of so far exciting (by an unvarnished statement of our wants) the zeal of our brethren at home, as not to render vain the Christian care of our rulers,—that I am induced to mention (what, to those who hear me, is unhappily but too familiar) the very great deficiency, in numerical strength, of the Clergy on the Indian establishment.

Of twenty-eight chaplains assigned by the Honourable Company to the Presidency of Fort William, fifteen only are now on their posts, and effective. Five are, from ill health and other unavoidable causes, at present absent on furlough; while of the remaining eight appointments, no fewer than seven are represented as vacant, the clergyman who fills the eighth only, being reported on his voyage from England.

The consequence has been, that, even in Calcutta and its vicinity, some Churches must have been shut up but for the occasional help of clergymen not in the Company's service; that at Cawnpoor, a single labourer is sinking under the duty of a military cantonment about five miles in length, containing two places of worship, two burial grounds, two distinct establishments of barracks, schools, and hospitals, and for which the wisdom of govern-

ment had designated two resident ministers;—while in the other mofussil provinces, some of the most important stations are addressing to me, almost daily, their earnest (and, unhappily, their unavailing) applications for that comfort and instruction which in our own country is accessible to all.

This is a state of things, beyond a doubt, sufficiently lamentable. It presents the revolting spectacle of a nation almost without a priesthood to the Romanists who dwell among us, and to the surrounding heathen. It has a tendency to increase itself and its own evils by oppressing and overpowering the strength of those labourers who still continue in the vineyard. And it excludes, in the worst and most effectual manner, from the teaching and ordinances of our religion, the daily increasing multitude of our countrymen and their descendants, of whom by far the greater part are still ardently attached to the faith and worship of their fathers.

In all which I have said, I am far from designing to convey a censure on our rulers. Those rulers have shown (I cheerfully bear them witness) a progressive attention, during many years, to the spiritual wants of their servants and soldiers in these distant lands. Their endowments have been liberal; they have been careful of the comforts and respectability of their clergy, and, in the general exercise of their patronage, they have exhibited a disinterestedness and an anxiety for the cause of

God and goodness, which few bodies of men have exhibited under similar circumstances. The inadequacy, the delay, the frustration of their measures for the spiritual good of India, may be ascribed, with more justice, to the general ignorance which prevails in England on most points connected with these important but distant territories; to an apprehension, (certainly not an unnatural one,) on the part of the younger clergy, of an unhealthy climate, and almost a life-long banishment, and to their consequent backwardness in soliciting or accepting appointments, the duties of which are little understood, but the sacrifices incident to which are easily and generally appreciated.

And I have, therefore, thus strongly, but truly, depicted the condition of our Indian Church, both as it accounts, in no small degree, for that tardy progress of Christ's kingdom in the east with which our adversaries are not slow to taunt us; and as it affords me an opportunity of bearing testimony to the diligence, the fidelity, the conciliatory and affectionate spirit, in which, so far as I have yet seen or known, the clergy of this diocese, to their power, and in some instances beyond their power, have laboured and are labouring.

Nor will I conceal my hope, that when our wants are more generally known, deserving candidates may more readily offer themselves to our rulers for situations, which, as they claim, undoubtedly, no common share of talent and diligence to discharge their duties effectually, so a greater and more im-

mediate return of usefulness is obtainable in them than in almost any stations of ministerial labour which have come within the compass of my experience.

It is, indeed, most true, that those men would be much mistaken who should anticipate, in the fortunes of an Indian chaplain, a life of indolence, of opulence, of luxury. An Indian chaplain must come prepared for hard labour in a climate where labour is often death; he must come prepared for rigid self-denial in situations where all around him invites to sensual indulgence; he must be content with an income liberal, indeed, in itself, but very often extremely disproportioned to the charities, the hospitalities, the unavoidable expenses of his station. He must be content to bear his life in his hand, and to leave, very often, those dearer than life to His care who feeds the ravens.

Nor are the qualifications which he will need, nor are the duties which will rest on him, less arduous than the perils of his situation. He must be no uncourtly recluse, or he will lose his influence over the higher ranks of his congregation. He must be no man of pleasure, or he will endanger their souls and his own. He must be a scholar, and a man of cultivated mind, for, in many of his hearers (wherever he is stationed), he will meet with a degree of knowledge and refinement which a parochial minister in England does not often encounter, and a spirit, sometimes of fastidious and even sceptical criticism, which the society, the

habits, and, perhaps, the very climate of India, has a natural tendency to engender. He must condescend to simple men, for here, as elsewhere, the majority of his congregation will, nevertheless, be the ignorant and the poor.

Nor, in his intercourse with this humble class of his hearers, must he anticipate the same cheering circumstances which make the house of the English parochial minister a school and temple of religion, and his morning and evening walk a source of blessing and blessedness. His servants will be of a different creed from himself, and insensible, in too many instances, to his example, his exhortations, and his prayers. His intercourse will not be with the happy and harmless peasant, but with the dissipated, the diseased, and often, the demoralized soldier. His feet will not be found at the wicker gate of the well-known cottage; beneath the venerable tree; in the grey church-porch, or by the side of the hop-ground and the corn-field; but he must kneel by the bed of infection or despair, in the barrack, the prison, or the hospital.

But to the well-tempered, the well-educated, the diligent and pious clergyman, who can endear himself to the poor without vulgarity, and to the rich without involving himself in their vices; who can reprove sin without harshness, and comfort penitence without undue indulgence; who delights in his Master's work, even when divested of those outward circumstances which in our own country contribute to render that work picturesque and

interesting; who feels a pleasure in bringing men to God, proportioned to the extent of their previous wanderings; who can endure the coarse (perhaps fanatical) piety of the ignorant and vulgar, and listen with joy to the homely prayers of men long strangers to the power of religion; who can do this, without himself giving way to a vain enthusiasm; and whose good sense, sound knowledge, and practical piety, can restrain and reclaim the enthusiasm of others to the due limits of reason and scripture; to him, above all, who can give his few leisure hours to fields of usefulness beyond his immediate duty; and who, without neglecting the European penitent, can aspire to the further extension of Christ's kingdom among the heathen; to such a man as Martyn was, and as some still are, (whom may the Lord of the harvest long continue to His Church!) I can promise no common usefulness and enjoyment in the situation of an Indian chaplain.

I can promise him, in any station to which he may be assigned, an educated society and an audience peculiarly qualified to exercise and strengthen his powers of argument and eloquence. I can promise him, generally speaking, the favour of his superiors, the friendship of his equals, and affection, strong as death, from those whose wanderings he corrects, whose distresses he consoles, and by whose sick and dying bed he stands as a ministering angel! Are further inducements needful? I yet can promise more. I can promise to such a man

the esteem, the regard, the veneration of the surrounding Gentiles; the consolation, at least, of having removed from their minds, by his blameless life and winning manners, some of the most inveterate and most injurious prejudices which oppose, with them, the reception of the Gospel; and the honour, it may be, (of which examples are not wanting among you,) of planting the cross of Christ in the wilderness of a heathen heart, and extending the frontiers of the visible Church amid the hills of darkness and the strong holds of errour and idolatry.

In what I have said, I feel that I have expressed, almost without intending it, my opinion as to what manner of man an Indian chaplain ought to be; and to such of you, my brethren, as fill that honourable rank, any further pastoral advice seems scarcely necessary. If there be any thing more, it must relate to matters of detail and local expediency, which may be left to every man for himself, according to his personal and particular experience.

Two such points there are, however, which I would generally press on the notice of all, because I can hardly conceive a situation in this country, where an attention to both will not be both necessary and blessed.

The first is, a continued and earnest furtherance of and attention to those powerful aids in your spiritual work, by the bounty of individuals, the parental care of government, and the pious munificence of the venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, in regimental or station schools,

wherever they exist or can be established; in the dissemination of religious tracts, of our excellent Liturgy, and the Holy Scriptures; and in the arrangement and conduct of those lending libraries, which should more particularly fall under the chaplain's care, and which I hope, by God's blessing, to see established throughout this land, wherever there is a barrack to receive, or an European soldier or invalid to use them.

The second point which I would recommend to every chaplain who is preparing himself for India, or who yet looks forward to a lengthened residence here, is the attentive and grammatical study of some one of the native languages. I mean not merely that jargon which a few weeks will bestow; which is picked up in our intercourse with the meanest of the people, and which suffices, perhaps, to order bread to be placed on our table, or to expedite our journey from stage to stage. Nor do I recommend, as a general measure, what is to most impracticable, and useful, perhaps, to few, an investigation of the abstruse elegancies and intricate machinery of the learned language of the brahmins. But I do earnestly recommend some further attention than the majority of chaplains in India are accustomed to pay, to those dialects which are intelligible to the great body of the Indian people, and which well-born and well-educated men employ in conversing with each other.

The duty, indeed, of endeavouring the conversion of his heathen neighbours, is to a chaplain, I

readily admit, an incidental duty only. It is a duty, nevertheless, expressly contemplated in those laws which send him hither; and the times may yet return in which it may be expedient to remind the opponents of Gentile conversion, that to acquire the languages and instruct the natives of India is declared in the charter of these colonies, to be a legitimate and necessary part of the labours of every chaplain whom the East India Company shall employ. I allow, nevertheless, that a Chaplain has other and more immediate cares. His vocation is, in the first instance, to the scattered flock of Christ in these lands, to the conversion and renewal of all who are already named after our Lord and Saviour. But God forbid that any among us should forget that it is his duty, as occasion offers, to labour after the good of all men; that he has no commission from God but that which commands him to preach the Gospel to every creature; and that there are patterns before him, of men abundantly and exemplarily zealous in their duty to their European charge, who have found leisure, nevertheless, for conveying the word of salvation to those without these limits, and, to the praise of presbyter, have added that of evangelist.

But this is not all. Even if you found no opportunity, or possessed no talent for convincing the professed unbeliever, yet in every city, and almost every cantonment of British India, a numerous and increasing population is found, the children of Europeans, and too often the monuments

of their vices, who, notwithstanding their English descent, are accessible to instruction through the languages of India alone, and who, though divested of the pride of caste, and, not a few of them nominally Christians, have as much need to be instructed in the first rudiments of Christianity as the inhabitants of Polynesia or Japan. On these your labours must often be bestowed, for they are an integral and essential part of that European and military population for whose immediate benefit you are sent out hither. And, when the many other ways are called to mind, in which a knowledge of the native languages will enable you to forward the cause of Christ; by superintending versions of the Scriptures and the Common Prayer, by tracts, by schools, and by similar gradual and peaceful methods of acquiring influence over the Indian mind, and diffusing through the warm and ripening mass an unseen leaven of godliness, it will appear that this method of employing a clergyman's few leisure hours, is one of the most effectual means by which those hours may be made a source of blessing.

Thus far, my reverend brethren, I have addressed myself to those of your number who may be regarded in a peculiar degree as the parochial and beneficed clergy of British India: but there are others not comprehended under this description, and it is with no common thankfulness to God, that I see the episcopal chair of Calcutta now first surrounded by those who are mission-

aries themselves, as well as by those who are engaged in the important office of educating youth for the future service of missions.

To the importance of that service no Christian can be insensible: and I regard it as one among the most favourable signs of the present times, that, while Providence has, in a manner visible and almost miraculous, prepared a high way in the wilderness of the world for the progress of His truth, and made the ambition, the commerce, the curiosity, and enterprise of mankind, His implements in opening a more effectual door to His Gospel, the call thus given has been answered by a display of zeal unexampled at any time since the period of the reformation; and America and England have united with Denmark and Germany to send forth a host of valiant and victorious confessors, to bear the banner of the Cross through those regions where darkness and death have hitherto spread their broadest shadows.

Nor can it be a matter of reasonable surprise to any of us, that the exertions of this kind, which the last fifteen years have witnessed, should have excited a mingled feeling of surprise and displeasure in the minds, not only of those who are strangers to the powerful and peculiar emotions which send forth the missionary to his toil, but of those who, though themselves not idle, could not endure that God should employ other instruments besides; and were ready to speak evil of the work itself, rather than that others who followed not with them should

cast out devils in the name of their common Master. To the former of these classes may be referred the loud opposition, the clamours, the expostulation, the alarm, the menace, and ridicule which, some few years ago, were systematically and simultaneously levelled at whatever was accomplished or attempted for the illumination of our Indian fellow-subjects. We can well remember, most of us, what revolutions and wars were predicted to arise from the most peaceable preaching and argument; what taunts and mockery were directed against scholars who had opened to us the gates of the least accessible oriental dialects; what opprobrious epithets were lavished on men of whom the world was not worthy. We have heard the threats of the mighty; we have heard the hisses of the fool; we have witnessed the terrours of the worldly wise, and the unkind suspicions of those from whom the missionary had most reason to expect encouragement. Those days are, for the present, gone by. Through the Christian prudence, the Christian meekness, the Christian perseverance, and indomitable faith of the friends of our good cause, and through the protection, above all, and the blessing of the Almighty, they are gone by! The angel of the Lord has, for a time, shut the mouths of these fiercer lions, and it is the false brother now, the pretended fellow-soldier in Christ, who has lift up his heel against the propagation of the Christian Gospel.

But thus it is that the power of Anti-Christ hath

worked hitherto and doth work. Like those spectre forms which the madness of Orestes saw in classical mythology, the spirit of religious party sweeps before us in the garb and with the attributes of pure and evangelical religion. The Cross is on her shoulders, the chalice in her hand, and she is anxiously busied, after her manner, in the service of Him by whose holy name she also is called. But outstrip her in the race, but press her a little too closely, and she turns round on us with all the hideous features of envy and of rage. Her hallowed taper blazes into a sulphurous torch, her hairs bristle into serpents, her face is as the face of them that go down to the pit, and her words are words of blasphemy!

What other spirit could have induced a Christian minister, after himself, as he tells us, long labouring to convert the heathen, to assert that one hundred millions of human beings, a great, a civilised, an understanding, and most ancient people, are collectively and individually under the sentence of reprobation from God, and under a moral incapacity of receiving that Gospel, which the God who gave it hath appointed to be made known to all?

What other spirit could have prompted a member of that Church which professes to hold out the greatest comfort to sinners, to assert of a nation with whom, whatever are their faults, I, for one, should think it impossible to live long without loving them, that they are not only enslaved to a cruel and degrading superstition, but that the principal

persons among them are sold to all manner of wickedness and cruelty; without mercy to the poor; without natural affection for each other; and this with no view to quicken the zeal of Christians to release them from their miserable condition, but that Christians may leave them in that condition still, to the end that they may perish everlastingly.

What other spirit, finally, could have led a Christian missionary, (with a remarkable disregard of truth, the proofs of which are in my hands,) to disparage the success of the different Protestant missions; to detract from the numbers, and vilify the good name of that ancient Syrian Church, whose flame, like the more sacred fire of Horeb, sheds its lonely and aweful brightness over the woods and mountains of Malabar, and to assure us, (hear Oh Israel!) in the same treatise, and almost in the same page, that the Christians of India are the most despised and wretched of its inhabitants; that whoever takes up the cross, takes up the hatred of his own people, the contempt of Europeans, loss of goods, loss of employment, destitution, and often beggary; and yet that it is *interest alone*, and a love of this world, which has induced in any Hindu, even a temporary profession of the Gospel?

And this is the professed apologist of the people of India! My Brethren, I have known the sharpness of censure, and I am not altogether without experience in the suffering of undeserved and injurious imputations. And, let the righteous smite

me friendly, I shall receive it (I trust in God) with gratitude. Let my enemy write a book, so he be my open enemy, I trust (through the same Divine aid) to bear it or to answer it. But whatever reproofs I may deserve, to whatever calumnies I may be subjected, may the mercy of Heaven defend me from having a false friend for my vindicator!

My own experience in India is, I own, as yet but little; but the conclusions which I have been led to form are of an extremely different character. I have found, or seemed to myself to find, a race of men, like other men who are not partakers in the regenerating principle of the Gospel, very far gone, indeed, from God and His original righteousness; but exempt perhaps, by the fortunate circumstances of their climate and habits, from some of those more outrageous and appalling vices of which so dreadful a picture is drawn in those nations to whom the apostles preached Christ crucified.

I have found a race of gentle and temperate habits; with a natural talent and acuteness beyond the ordinary level of mankind, and with a thirst for general knowledge which even the renowned and inquisitive Athenians can hardly have surpassed or equalled. Prejudiced, indeed, they are, in favour of their ancient superstitions; nor should I think, to say the truth, more favourably of the character, or augur more happily of the eventual conversion and perseverance of any man or set of men, whom a light consideration could stir from their paternal creed, or who received the word of truth without

cautious and patient inquiry. But I am yet to learn, that the idolatry which surrounds us is more enthralling in its influence on the human mind than those beautiful phantoms and honied sorceries which lurked beneath the laurels of Delos and Daphne, and floated on the clouds of Olympus. I am not yet convinced, that the miserable bondage of castes, and the consequences of breaking that bondage, are more grievous to be endured by the modern Indian than those ghastly and countless shapes of death which beset the path of the Roman convert. And who shall make me believe, that the same word of the Most High, which consigned to the moles and the bats the idols of Chaldee and Babylon, and dragged down the lying father of gods and men from his own Capitol, and the battlements of his "Eternal City," must yet arrest its victorious wheels on the banks of the Indus or the Ganges, and admit the trident of Siva to share, with the Cross, a divided empire?

That the missionary to whose work I have referred, may have been, himself, unsuccessful in his labours, I certainly am not called on to deny or question. That those labours were honest and diligent I am extremely ready to believe, both from the acknowledged blamelessness of his life, from the time which he spent in the work, and the reputation which he enjoyed in Southern India. But the unsuccessful labours of one man, however diligent and able, are no argument against the hope that God, who alone giveth the increase, may

bestow more abundant blessing on other husbandmen.

And when we recollect that, by the rules of his sect, the author of whom I speak was precluded from the free dispersion, among his hearers and his flock, of those sacred writings to which the first preachers of Christianity appeal on all occasions, or which those preachers themselves left behind for the conversion and confirmation of after-ages; when we recollect, that no translation of, I will not say the Bible, but of any single Gospel or Epistle, was entrusted, for all that appears, by this missionary to his Indian converts;—it may occasion the less wonder that they were but lightly affected with a faith whose authentic documents were withheld from them. And since, on his own showing, it was his object, and that of his brethren, to allure the Hindu from his ancient creed, by a display of those gaudy vanities in which the Romish sect most nearly approaches to the religion of Brahma, what marvel will remain that the populace preferred those images to which they were accustomed, or that the more philosophic inquirer found little apparent advantage in transferring his veneration from the legends of the Ramayana to the almost equally doubtful names of St. Veronica, St. Ursula, and St. George the Cappadocian!—But we, my brethren, have not so learned Christ. Whether our success be great or small, it is to something very different from Hinduism that we Protestants lead our converts; and though I am

far, Heaven knows, from placing on the same level the Brahminical and the Romish faith; and though, as a form, though a corrupt form, of the knowledge whereby men are brought to God, I rejoice in every conquest which this latter has made among the heathen, I would rather, should God so far honour me, be the instrument of bringing one idolater to the worship of the one true God, and the one Mediator between God and man, than to have persuaded, like Xavier, my tens of thousands to patter their rosary in Latin instead of Sanscrit, and transfer to the Saints the honour which they had paid to the Devetas.

But are any converts made to our sober and less attractive ritual? Will not the homely truths of Protestantism fail to attract attention where the gorgeous rites of Romish splendour fail?—Let me, in the first place, express my sorrow, that so little pains have yet been taken to bring Protestant Christianity before the attention of the heathen in its most comely and attractive form; in that form which blends decency of ornament with perfect purity of worship, and has preserved the beauties of the ancient liturgies without any intermixture of more recent superstition. The Common Prayer has been translated into Hindustani, Cingalese, and Tamil. But how few places of worship for those different nations are there, in which that excellent ritual is regularly used with its striking and primitive appendages of surplice, font and altar! Even where Ministers of our own Church have officiated,

I have heard, in many parts of India, of a carelessness in these particulars. I am, therefore, the more anxious to call the attention of those who hear me to the advantage, and, I will say, the duty of conforming in external decorum, no less than in spirit and doctrine, to a Church of which, I trust, none of us are ashamed; and to that beauty and regularity of worship which both well becomes the truth, and may cause the truth itself to be received with less reluctance.

But are no converts made to Protestant Christianity? Bear witness to the contrary the Christians of Agra, of Benares, of Buxar, of Meerut, and Chunar! Bear witness those numerous believers of our own immediate neighbourhood, whom, though we differ on many, and doubtless, on very important points, I should hate myself if I could regard as any other than my brethren! Let the populous Christian districts of the Carnatic and Tanjore bear witness, where believers are not reckoned by solitary individuals, but by hundreds and by thousands! Bear witness Ceylon, where the Cross has, in a great measure, lost its reproach, and the nobles of the land are gradually assuming without scruple the attire, the language, and the religion of Englishmen! And let him, finally, bear witness whom we have now received into the number of the commissioned servants of the Church, and whom, we trust, at no distant day, to send forth, in the fulness of Christian authority, to make known the way of truth to those his countrymen

from whose errors he has himself been gloriously delivered!

To perpetuate and extend these triumphs must be the endeavour of those around me, who, however small their success, are aware that, in thus endeavouring, they are fulfilling a solemn commandment of God, and who, though their visible success should be none at all, will at least, if they are faithful in their ministry, have saved their own souls, and laid up for themselves a good reward on that day when the Lord shall make up His jewels; a day for which no better preparation can be found than a patient and unwearied continuance in well doing, and in stretching out, like Him whom we serve, our consecrated hands to exhort, to heal, and to save, though it may be that, like His, our hands are stretched out to a gainsaying and unbelieving people!

From even the taunts of an adversary, however, a wise man will increase his wisdom. And, if we learn, from the volume which I have quoted, a greater moderation in our language and a greater circumspection in our deportment; more strict adherence to the union and discipline of the Church; and a more careful abstinence from every thing like exaggeration in those accounts of our progress in the work which are sent to our friends in Europe, it is apparent that some of those hindrances will be lessened which impede the progress of the truth, and that a more abundant blessing may be expected

on our toils from Him who is the God of peace, of order, and of humility.

It is on these grounds that I would recommend to you, in your intercourse with the heathen, a careful abstinence from every thing which may enlist their angry passions on the side of errour; all expressions hurtful to their national pride, and even all bitter and contemptuous words against the objects of their idolatry.

In these respects, no better model can be found than the great apostle of the Gentiles, whose harshest words, in his addresses to the Athenians and men of Lystra, are of a kind to stimulate the curiosity, far more than to wound the zeal of the fiercest and least tolerant Pagan, and of whom at Ephesus, however boldly and successfully he had contended for the truth, no man was able to say that he was actually a blasphemer of their goddess. In no cause, indeed, however righteous, can abuse and insult hold the place of argument; and far nobler conquests may be gained in a friendly discussion with our adversary, than by adopting a tone which, in itself, gives him an additional motive to shut his ears against all which we urge to him.

The next topic which I would desire to impress on your minds, is the advantage and necessity (I speak both to chaplains and missionaries) of a constant and confidential communication of the more important occurrences of your ministry with each other and with your ecclesiastical superiors.

It was a wise rule of the ancient Church, "χωρις ἐπισκοπου μη τι ποιειτε," not, certainly, that it is well or worthy of the priesthood that any man or set of men should systematically play the part of spies on their Christian brethren, but because, by such a system of confidence, the very existence of spies is rendered almost impossible; because the elders of the Church, being acquainted with the views of every man, and having opportunity, in the least offensive way, to correct, to guide, to forward them, became themselves a leading party in every beneficial measure, and were enabled often to render measures beneficial, which would otherwise have assumed a very doubtful character.

It is the misfortune of the modern English Church, that the Bishop is too often regarded by his clergy, not as the master-spring, but as merely a controuling power; a remora to check too ardent zeal, rather than an agent to further improvement; a censor of measures already adopted, rather than a guide in measures proposed. I rejoice to say that, with such of my clergy as I have as yet personally known, I feel myself on a very different footing; and it is in order that this mutual confidence may become general throughout the diocese, that I am anxious that all should be convinced that, in their Ordinary, they have a fellow-servant and a friend, actuated by the same general principles, confessing the same faith, and having the same great objects continually in view; who is only desirous to forward their labours of love by

the aid of such experience as he possesses, and to prove to them, experimentally, that for the most ardent zeal, and for activity the most incessant, enough and more than enough of room is afforded by the closest principles of Church union, and the most cautious adherence to the canons and constitutions of that Church to which we profess allegiance.

Lastly, my brethren, whereuntosoever ye are called, and whatever may be the peculiar sphere of ministerial action marked out for you, let it be always in your minds, as the prevailing principle of your lives, that you are ministers of Christ, and devoted to his high and holy calling. "*Hoc agite!*" Let every man who hears you preach; every man who witnesses your performance of your sacred functions; every man who is admitted to your society and familiar conversation, be made aware that there is thus much distinction in your character, and that your main object is that of your profession.

Even if worldly estimation, if worldly popularity were our objects, it is conduct like this which (undisgraced by affectation and formality, and proceeding unfeignedly from the good treasure of the heart) would eventually most secure them. Consistency is, after all, that quality for which, even among worldly and carnal men, the most unfeigned respect is entertained; and the man who is in earnest, whether they account him mistaken or no, is always esteemed the most, and listened to most willingly. But the world is not the master whom

I am desirous that you should seek to please; and the applause of the world is of very little moment to those whose industry is commanded in the words, "occupy till I come!" and whose labours will be rewarded with, "well done, good and faithful servant!"

It was by a more than usual attention to the consistency of his appropriate character, and to the paramount and indispensable necessity of his appropriate pursuits and duties, that the character of Bishop Middleton became that which you beheld, and that which he, for the example of us all, has left behind him. That great and good man, had his mind been attracted to secular objects, possessed much of every quality on which the world bestows its favour. But, though his memory was stored with all profane and civil literature, the application of his learning and talents was to ecclesiastical purposes only. He ranked among the very foremost critics of his age, yet it was to scriptural criticism only that his acumen was directed. He had, I am assured, an inexhaustible supply of lighter and more elegant literature, yet he sought to be remembered as a preacher and a theologian only. Nay more, when his life-long labours were at length drawing near their term, as if fearing the applause of men, even in those branches of study which were strictly appropriate and ministerial, he consigned, as a last sacrifice, his laboured manuscripts to the flames, content to live in the memory of those who personally knew, and loved, and ho-

noured him, and desiring no other reward than the mercy of Him to whom his thoughts, his studies, and his prayers, had been long and steadily dedicated.

One monument, however, he has left behind of the zeal which prompted, the wisdom which planned, and the liberality which largely contributed to it, which must long preserve his name in the grateful recollection of the Indian Church, and which bids fair, under the Divine protection, to become eventually a greater blessing to these extensive lands, than any which they have received from their foreign lords, since the gate was first opened by the Portuguese to the commerce and conquest of Asia.

I mean the excellent institution of Bishop's College, which, notwithstanding every disadvantage arising from scanty funds, from unfinished buildings, and the premature and irreparable loss of him whose talents were, of all men's, best adapted to contend with the difficulties which beset his infant establishment, is already, I rejoice to say, made available as a place of education, and already confirms the hopes with which its projector delighted to contemplate it, as the probable future source of sacred learning and religious instruction to the Christian youth, whether of European or native blood, through the whole of this vast empire, and as the instrument, in God's good time, of making plain His way through the wilderness of the heathen world, and giving light to the most remote,

the most obscured, and the most hopeless of the nations who sit in darkness.

But to the claims of Bishop's College on the assistance, the liberality, and the prayers, of all who love our English Church, or desire that it may be made an instrument of enlarging the general Church of Christ among mankind; to all which it now does, and the much more which with due support it may accomplish; and to the meritorious labours, I will add, of him who now single-handed supports the whole burden of the establishment, it is my hope, on some future day, more specifically to call your attention.

In the present instance, that attention, I am aware, must be exhausted, from the length of this morning's solemnity[1], and I feel myself less able to do justice to a subject of such importance, while I am suffering under the recent loss[2] of a distinguished and excellent friend; from whose eminent talents, from whose amiable temper, from whose high religious principles, and his repeatedly ex-

[1] The visitation at Calcutta, to which alone these two paragraphs relate, was lengthened by the addition of an ordination service, that of the native catechist of Schwartz, Christian David, of Tanjore, who is alluded to in the earlier part of the charge.—*Calcutta Editor.*

[2] The friend whose sudden loss is thus feelingly alluded to by the Bishop, is the Honourable Sir Christopher Puller, Chief Justice of Bengal, who had but recently arrived in the country, and died, after a short illness, May 25, 1824, but a few hours before the delivery of this charge in Calcutta.—*Calcutta Editor.*

pressed intention of devoting his ample means and powerful mind to the service of that God from whom he had received them, I had anticipated the most important aids in securing the prosperity of the Indian Church, and furthering the triumphant progress of that Gospel in which his hope and heart were laid up, and in which, while he yet lived, his life was hidden.

A few days only are gone by, since, with animation on his benevolent countenance, he expressed to me his gratitude to the Most High for the many blessings which he had received, and his desire to dedicate to God, through Jesus Christ, an increased proportion of his time, his means, and his influence. A few hours only are past since those good resolutions are gone thither, where they are treasured by a gracious Master whom he had served from his youth, and who, when his noon of life had scarcely begun to decline, saw fit to call him to his repose and his reward. In him India—in him the Anglo-Indian Church—in him the cause of missions here and throughout the world—in him the poor of every caste and country have lost a fearless, a kind, a bountiful, and unpretending friend; but he will not have died in vain if the consideration of his sudden mortality induces us to ponder the worth of this world in regions where, more remarkably than on any other part of its surface, the present moment is all that we can count on, where the sublimest and most awful phenomena of nature remind us every instant of our uncertain tenure,

and the still breath of pestilence, and the louder warnings of thunder, adjure us to apply our hearts to wisdom.

Finally, brethren, farewell! Be patient and watch unto prayer; for your flocks and for yourselves, that ye may be diligent in the discharge of your stewardships, for behold He cometh quickly, and blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing!

And "Oh, Almighty God! who hast built Thy Church on the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone, grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy temple acceptable unto Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

SERMON I.

PREACHING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

[Preached at the Cathedral, Calcutta, Dec. 21, 1823.]

St. John i. 20.

He confessed and denied not, but confessed "I am not the Christ."

About the middle of the long reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, when all mankind were in hushed and anxious expectation of that Great Deliverer whom both Jewish and Pagan prophecies had foretold as about this time to make his appearance upon earth; a new and mighty teacher of morality appeared in the wilderness of Judæa. His dress, his voice, his aspect, were the image of austere holiness, and of the then almost forgotten severities of the ancient prophets and penitents. His hair and beard, unshorn, after the pattern of the Nazarites, hung wildly over his breast and shoulders; his half-naked body was macerated with frequent fasting; his raiment was the coarse hair cloth which covered the Arab's tent; his food, the insects of the air and of the field; and his luxury, the honey left by wild bees in the sun-burnt rocks of Arabia Petræa.

He was recognized as John, the son of a Jewish priest, whose birth had, some thirty years before, been announced by repeated miracles; foretold by an angel, preceded by a miraculous dumbness and followed by a miraculous cure; whose boyhood and youth had, from the first, been strange and solitary, and who had fled from the amusements natural to his age, and the pursuits appropriate to his station, to the dismal and dangerous retreat of the waste and howling wilderness: till now, in the full vigour of his mind, and sublimed and purified by a life of meditation, he took his station at the ford of Bethabara, and, in words full of power and dignity, called on his countrymen to escape from the wrath to come.

The ford of Bethabara, which he selected for this first appearance, was a place of all others best calculated for the double purpose of a popular teacher and a severe and habitual ascetic. Only six miles from Jericho, and in the high road from Jerusalem and the sea coast to the wealthy cities of Gadara and Aræopolis, a celebrated prophet was, in such a situation, seldom likely to want an audience; while the waters of Jordan, its marshes, and the adjacent wilderness, not only suited his mission as a Baptist, but were favourable also to the austerities and occasional secessions from the world which became the character of one who mourned for the world's transgressions.

Nor was the ford of Bethabara recommended by such considerations only. With St. John and with

the Jews it might, probably, weigh still more, that it was by this very passage, which was regarded as a figurative baptism, that their ancestors under Joshua, (himself, both in name and office, the type of a more illustrious Teacher,) had gone through the stream of Jordan, and, not without a miracle, had entered into their promised Canaan. And, as the scene of Elijah's occasional residence and miracles, as the visible instrument in the cleansing of Naaman, and as the favourite retreat, during the independence of the Israelitish state, of the most popular prophets and their scholars, there is reason to believe that both the river and the lake of Tiberias had acquired a sort of sacred character, and that the pilgrimages which Christians make thither are little more than the relics of a similar practice among the Jews.

The time, moreover, of St. John's appearance was no less favourable to his renown than the station which he had chosen. I have said that all mankind, and not the Jews alone, were at this period in still and anxious expectation of a mighty sovereign and conqueror to be born in the land of Judah; and I repeat the observation, because there are few facts in history more certain (though many of much less consequence are far more generally attended to,) than that amongst the heathen also, and more particularly in the Roman world, there were extant books of supposed divine authority, and which, so far as we have any account of them, gave an almost similar description of the future

Messiah with that which is read to the present day in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament.

I am well aware, indeed, that the work which now bears the name of the Sibylline prophecies, is marked by many strong internal proofs as a forgery of far later date than the reign of Augustus or Tiberius, and composed when the worship of the cross and the other superstitions of the middle ages, had already made considerable progress. But that books were in existence, under the name of the Sibylline Oracles and the Prophecies of Hydaspes, which spoke many strange and many true things of Christ and of His kingdom, is proved, by the testimony of the most ancient apologists for Christianity, as allowed by the heathen themselves to be ancient and inspired documents, and yet in favour of the Christians. It is in part confirmed by Cicero, who, when, for a political purpose, depreciating the authority of the Sibylline books, observes as a reason why they were not to be followed, that they contained doctrines contrary to the established systems of idolatry and polytheism[1]. And it is still more confirmed by that well known and remarkable Eclogue of Virgil, which so strangely corresponds with the leading chapters of Isaiah, and which, whatever its immediate occasion may have been, and however the flattery of the poet may have led him to apply to one of the Cæ-

[1] Cic. de Div. lib. ii. s. 54.

sarean family expressions of a nobler import, has avowedly borrowed its ornaments and metaphors from traditions or prophecies then actually current among his countrymen[1].

The subject is one not easily exhausted, and it is one to which I may hereafter recur. It is important in many respects, not only as, so far as it extends, a confirmation of Christianity, but as presumptive evidence, (when coupled with the prophecy of Balaam, the Epiphany of the Persian Magi, and the many circumstances in the Brahminical creed, which strangely border on our own,) that the coming of Christ was more widely made known, and the manifestation of the Spirit less limited in ancient times than Jews and Christians are apt to believe, and that the mercies of God through His Son, as they were intended for all, so they were made effectual to many, for whom, in the midst of their heathen darkness, our human wisdom would be at a loss to provide security.

But my present reason for mentioning the fact, is to point out the advantages with which the son of Zacharias began his mission, and the facilities which he possessed (had he thought fit to employ those facilities) for assuming any title or character which the wildest ambition might have dictated.

All Judea, in fact, (we learn it from profane as well as from sacred authorities) was excited and alarmed at his appearance. The priests and

[1] Virg. Buc. IV. v. 4. et seq.

scribes, the pharisees and sadducees, the publicans and the soldiers, (it appears from Josephus that Herod had sent an army across the desert against his father-in-law, Aretas king of Arabia Petræa) were alike moved by his eloquence, and added numbers to his audience and his disciples[1]. Nay, Herod himself, till incensed by the severe honesty of his counsels, appears to have held him in honour, and yielded obedience to many of his injunctions as one in whom the Spirit of God in no common measure abode, and whose favour and prayers were not below the notice even of a politician and a conqueror.

Nor can the enemies of our faith pretend that the facts which I have urged, are founded on the representations of Christian and partial authorities only. They are confirmed, circumstantially confirmed, by the last historian of the Jewish nation, who in a passage of undoubted authenticity[2], has attested the popularity, the virtues, the influence, and the untimely end of him whom our Lord designates as the most distinguished among the sons of women[3].

All things appear to have *favoured*, all things may be said to have *solicited* his assumption of the Messiah's name and character. The messengers from Jerusalem, we find actually pressing it on him, and, by a mixture of cross-examination

[1] Antiq. Book XVIII. c. v. §. 1.

[2] Antiq. Book XVIII. c. 5. §. 2.

[3] St. Matt. xi. 11.

and entreaty, persuading him to profess himself that which they so earnestly desired he might be found to be. "Who art thou? Art thou the Christ? Art thou Elias? Art thou that Prophet? Why baptisest thou then, if thou art not? Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us[1]?" Surely to the meaning of interrogatories like these, an imposter or a fanatic could hardly have remained insensible, any more than to the command of money and of men which the publicans and soldiers might have furnished, and the important position within his grasp, as occupying the ford of Jordan.

Place Mahomet in such a situation, and consider what answer he would have returned; contrast that answer with the answer sent by John, and enquire of your own hearts whether this last do not contain the words of truth and soberness. He describes himself not as the expected King of Israel, but as a harbinger sent before to smooth and prepare His way; he disclaims the title both of Elias and Jeremiah (the latter of whom was, by many of the Jews, expected to rise again), and instead of smooth and flattering language to those whose good will it was most necessary to conciliate, he exhorts his hearers, one and all, to practical holiness and individual amendment of life; reproving the pharisees for their hypocrisy, and Herod for his uncleanness; the soldiers for their rapine, and

[1] St. John i. 19—22.

the publicans for their extortion; while, instead of warming the hearts of men with the hopes of national greatness and political freedom, he forewarns them that the axe was already laid to the root of their tree, and predicts, in no doubtful terms, the approaching rejection and ruin of their church and people[1].

Is it urged that St. John was sensible of the dangers which might arise from assuming the foremost and most conspicuous place in a religious revolution; that he preferred the safer rank of vizier to the new Messiah, and was anxious, therefore, to point out to the curiosity and reverence of the multitude, some other head on which might rest the task of redeeming Israel from bondage, the splendours and the dangers of sovereignty?

On whom did his election fall? Did he fix on some well-known character, some powerful and popular leader, who was best qualified to promote his views and to ensure success to his predictions? Herod was at hand, corresponding to all these characters, and would no doubt have done many things, nay, every thing which a reputed prophet could have asked, who undertook to clothe him with the title of Messiah, and Son of David. The Parthian was on the frontier, with the gold and the horsemen of the east at his command, waiting only for such a demonstration on the part of the Jews to rush forward with all his archery. Ro-

[1] St. Luke iii. 7—20.

man generals might have been found (as Josephus afterwards found Vespasian) to listen with greediness to the tale that, from the east, a monarch of the world was, about this time, to issue[1]; or, if he preferred a native Jew, and a leader of humbler origin, the neighbouring mountains were filled with popular and warlike chieftains, who had resisted thus far the mandates of the Roman conqueror, and to whom, in their last unavailing struggle for liberty, the nation of Israel at length committed their cause.

But on none of these did the choice of the Baptist fall. He chose an unknown young man, of royal blood indeed, but of obscure and narrow circumstances; the reputed son of a carpenter in a provincial town of Galilee. Him he approaches with the reverence due to a superior being; in terms of the deepest abasement he describes his own inferiority to Him, and points Him out to the multitude of his disciples as the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, the Person who, though his junior by mortal birth, had, in Heaven, existed before him; the latchet of whose sandal he was himself unworthy to loose; but for the manifestation of whom to Israel he had been sent to baptise with water.

And, here again, the opponents of Christianity have no ground for objecting that our facts are taken from the Gospel alone. The disciples of St.

[1] Jos. Bell. Jud. lib. III. c. 8.

John, a sect of Jews still existing in considerable numbers in the north-eastern parts of Arabia, who, by a strange perverseness, while professing themselves the Baptist's followers, reject, in all essential points, his testimony concerning Jesus; have preserved, nevertheless, amid the fable and allegory of their mystical books, an account of how St. John baptised the True Light, the holy Son of God, in the Jordan, with the strange addition, in which, however, some circumstances of truth are mingled, that the person thus distinguished was seen by St. John no more, but that His Spirit rested on him, while He Himself returned to His Father.

They thus, as may be seen by a reference to the passage itself in Michaelis [1], identify St. John with the Messiah, whom he foretold, and incorporate him with the Second Person in the Godhead. It is strange how such a perversion of the truth should have found place among men who approach so nearly to the truth; but their very blindness makes their testimony, so far as it goes, more valuable, inasmuch as it is, in a certain degree, the testimony of an adversary.

Nor, by those who are constrained to admit the leading facts of our Saviour's intercourse with St. John, will the appearance of any previous or subsequent collusion between them be pretended. They, indeed, were distant kinsmen; but the habits of

[1] Michaelis, vol. III. pp. 295—302. For the Christians of St. John, see also Taylor's Calmet, fifth edit.

St. John's early life had effectually divided him from one who, till thirty years of age, had remained patiently subject to the domestic discipline and humble toils of His earthly parent. St. John himself declares, and there is every appearance of truth in the declaration, that he knew not the man, save by a miraculous and public sign, who was to baptise with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Instead of taking advantage of the zeal of the assembled multitude, which, had any concert existed, the Messiah and His forerunner would scarcely have neglected to do, our Saviour wanders forth alone, without waiting to receive their homage, and lingers for six weeks in the depths of the adjoining wilderness. On His return, though again hailed by the Baptist as the Lamb of God, He resumes no intercourse with him; each proceeds on his course of laborious preaching, of painful wandering, but our Lord alone, of blessed and most mighty miracles; the one laying claim to an existence and authority eternal, supreme, and infinite; the other, even in bonds and death, rejoicing in the success of the younger prophet, and cheerfully sacrificing his own importance and supremacy to *His* superior claim on whom the hopes of Israel rested, and of whom all the prophets of ancient time had spoken.

It is plain that St. John, while acting thus, could have no motive for deceiving others. But might he be himself deceived? was he an honest but visionary enthusiast? Many reasons may be urged against our entertaining such an opinion of him.

In the first place, the character of an enthusiast is almost always strongly marked by pride. Such a person is extremely unlikely to descend, as St. John did, to take the second place, or to rejoice so consistently and unaffectedly in the decay of his own popularity.

Secondly, the practical tenour of John's preaching, the repentance which he inculcated, and which he made, as we see in his answers to the soldiers and publicans, to consist not in superstitious forms, not in abstraction and contemplation, but in the discharge by every man of the plain and appropriate duties of his condition, is of a character too honest, too sensible and sound, for a heated temper or a diseased imagination.

And, above all, the coincidence of his choice with the circumstances and character of Jesus, is a decisive proof that such a choice was not determined by chance, nor built on the dictates of a capricious and casual fancy. If men drew lots for a king, it would be strange indeed if, out of a mighty and promiscuous multitude, the lot should actually fall on one of royal blood, of unexceptionable character, with every private and every public quality which could fit him for a ruler or a conqueror. But what are the qualifications of an earthly king, to those marks which were to distinguish the Messiah, who was not only to be a descendant of David, but the son of a virgin; who was not only to speak as never man spake, but to do the works which never man did; to heal the sick, to cleanse

the leper, to cast out devils, to preach the Gospel to the poor, to raise the dead, yea, and Himself to arise from the dead, having first poured forth His soul to death, and made His life an offering for many? Was it a casual or enthusiastic choice which rested on a Man, whose bidding the waves obeyed? Was the fig-tree in the plot, which dried up at the word of Jesus? or were the earth and moon and sun confederates in the forgery, which quaked, and became dim, and hid their glories in the hour when the Lord was crucified? Verily "John did no miracle; but all things that John spake of this Man were true[1]:" and the truth and the life is in Him.

A confirmation, then, of our faith, is the first and most obvious lesson which we are to learn from the Baptist's history. But there are other circumstances in which the son of Zacharias was sent for the instruction of the world, and in which he was given as a sign for many. I say a *sign* and not a *pattern*, inasmuch as, for the particular austerities which he practised, we have no warrant in the example of our Lord, nor in the earlier days of the Church, nor could such austerities be usually practised without a neglect of more important duties. But when we see the son of Zacharias in the wilderness, a mournful solitary man, can we refrain from observing, how insignificant in the sight of God are the advantages of

[1] St. John x. 41.

worldly wealth and greatness, since the most illustrious of His saints and His only Son Himself, had of this world's goods so extremely small a pittance? Or, can we avoid observing, that as St. John, the reprover of sin, preceded Jesus, the messenger of pardon; so Christ, it is plain, can be only effectually approached by the gate of repentance, while repentance is of no avail, unless, like St. John, it leads us to Christ?

Some days yet remain of that season which the Church has devoted to the consideration of our Saviour's advent, and a preparation for the feast of His nativity. In those days, let St. John be in your thoughts; during those days let the Son of God be the object of your devotions; and intreat His grace that you may be so prepared to partake in His sacraments, that at His second coming in might and majesty ye may be found fit to enter into His joy. Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He returneth shall find thus doing!

SERMON II.

OFFICE OF CHRIST.

[Preached at Trichinopoly, April 2, 1826.]

1 St. John v. 6—8.

This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one.

To understand the meaning of these difficult words of St. John, it will be necessary to consider the tendency of his general argument, and for that purpose to go back to the former part of the chapter whence they are taken, in which he is at once enforcing the practical duties of a Christian, and the motives and principles and gracious aids from which those duties must proceed, and by which alone our weakness is enabled to perform them. We are called upon, he first tells us, to prove our love of God by the active discharge of our duty; and this duty is rendered easy to us by the change which is wrought by God's grace in every one who truly seeks His mercy through the merits of His Son, which, to express the total alteration caused by it in our desires and habits, is called regeneration, or

being born afresh, and, to signify the degree of God's power to which we are thereby admitted, is here called by St. John, the being "born of God." "This is the love of God," he tells us, "that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous; for whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world[1]." As if he had said, the love of God can only be proved either to God or man, by our keeping those commandments, which God Himself hath given us. But how are these commandments to be kept? How is it that, weak as we are, the lovers and servants of sin, we shall be enabled to do all which God requires at our hands as proofs of our love? How shall we be able to deny ourselves and our sinful lusts, to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil; to give up our sins, though those sins be dearer to us than a right hand or a right eye; to bear with cheerfulness the scorn and persecution of men; to be contented to incur the names of fool and hypocrite and madman, rather than do those things which God has forbidden? The world and its temptations are set against the kingdom of Christ, and who are we that we should be able to struggle with the world? Be not afraid of your own weakness, or the world's terrour. In yourselves you have no power, but through Christ's merits power shall be given you; and he that is born of God, we have God's own word for it, shall be able to overcome the world. But wherewith are we to be thus enabled? What shall be our wea-

[1] 1 St. John v. 4.

pon in this great battle? through what feelings, what hopes, what inward power, shall we be able to resist such enticements, to withstand such terrours? The objection is foreseen, the answer is ready; "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith; who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God[1]?" In other words, our knowledge and belief in Christ and in His promises, our hopes of Heaven, our fears of hell, our deep and unaffected thankfulness towards Him by whose merits Heaven is opened to us, and by whose sufferings we are redeemed from everlasting misery; these hopes, this fear, this love, are so much stronger than all with which the world can tempt us, that if we resolutely maintain this faith as our comforter under distress, and as our warning guide when urged by pleasure or by interest, there is no distress, no pleasure, no interest which can be sufficient to separate us from our duty and from our love which is in Christ. It is always thus, when a stronger motive is offered to the mind, and so offered that the mind is really made sensible of it, those weaker objects which before impelled or attracted us lose their effect on our will, and give place to the more powerful hope or apprehension. When the sun is absent from the earth, and the Heaven is obscured with clouds, a candle from a cottage window shines far and wide like a star through the darkness. But let the moon

[1] V. 4, 5.

rise and the stars of Heaven appear, the candle is seen no longer, and both the moon and the stars grow dim when the glorious light of day walks forth from his eastern chamber. Exactly so, in the natural state of man, the meanest trifles are sufficient to entice or agitate us; one man seeks for happiness in pleasure and sensuality; another gives his whole mind and care to the gathering together of wealth, all which in a few years he must leave behind; with a third, ambition is the ruling passion. But if an angel were to lift up one of these men, as St. Paul was caught up in vision, if he were to hold him by the hair of his head between hell and Paradise, if he were to show him from the middle of that great gulph whereby the seats of pain and blessing are divided, the tormenting flames, the bitter tears, the hopeless agony which dwell in the first; and the trees of life, the groves of palm, the golden city, with its gates of pearl and crystal streets, which God hath prepared for them that love Him[1]; if he were told, "from those torments Christ hath died to save thee, and to these habitations of blessing His grace will bring thee if thou dost not cast away thy soul:" and if, while the man yet saw these opposite prospects, he were at that very moment to be tempted by the choicest of the things which he had followed after, do you think that they would have power to move him? Oh no; his heart would be full of other thoughts, of Heaven and hell, of blessing and cursing, of his natural danger and

[1] Rev. xxi. 21.

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his hope in Jesus Christ, and all that once could rouse his passion most would fall as idly on his senses, as music on the deaf ear, or beauty on the blinded eye. But that effect which the actual sight of Heaven and hell is supposed to produce on a man so circumstanced, the faith that Heaven and hell are really what they are represented in Scripture, will be able, if we keep it constantly in mind, to produce on our hearts and behaviour. By this we are more than conquerors, and by this we shall triumph not only over the world, but over the devil and ourselves, if we continue to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and to receive the Gospel, which He hath given us, and to bear by His grace this faith in our souls, and to recall it to our minds whenever temptation comes upon us.

In the former verses, then, of this portion of St. John's Epistle, we are taught the necessity of good works, and the manner in which faith, if sincere and constant, will produce the answerable fruit of good works in our life and conversation. And the apostle then continues to explain in very few and somewhat mysterious words, the nature of that faith which we are to maintain respecting the person and office of our Saviour. We are to believe that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God," that He "came by water and by blood, not by water only, but by water and blood," and we are to believe this on the testimony of God's infallible Spirit. "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, and the Spirit is truth."

It is not my intention to enter on the long controverted subject of the authenticity of that particular verse which follows, in which mention is made of the Three Heavenly Witnesses; that verse, undoubtedly, teaches nothing which a trinitarian can admit to be at variance with the general tenour of Scripture. I am, however, little inclined to seek support for an aweful truth from materials of suspected soundness, or (while the doctrine of a Trinity in unity is taught in so many other texts of Scripture) to lay a stress on one of which it is not ascertained that it is in Scripture. And I am, in the present instance, yet more disposed to avoid entering into the discussion, since the particular verse in question, so far as the main purpose and connexion of the apostle's argument are concerned, is illustrative and ornamental only. The number and unity of the Celestial Witnesses are only alluded to on account of their analogy, in these particulars, with the triple and accordant evidence of "the spirit, the water, and the blood." It is to these last, then, and to the testimony which they bear, that I am anxious to direct your attention; and, in so doing, it shall be my endeavour, first, to ascertain what doctrine that is for which St. John is here contending; secondly, who those witnesses are which he describes as effectually supporting it; and, thirdly, in what manner it becomes us to lay their testimony to heart, and apply to ourselves, our hopes, our fears, and the conduct of our mental and external habits, those aweful and comfortable

truths which the inspired reasoner enforces with so much earnestness.

It is obvious, in the first place, that the doctrine refers to some peculiarity in the person of Christ, and in the mission which He came to execute on the part of His Heavenly Father. In the preceding verses of the chapter, which, together with my text, have been read to you this morning from the altar, St. John had been establishing the necessity of good works, as an evidence of our love for God, and the necessity and efficacy of that faith without which a life of consistent holiness is impossible.

"This is the love of God that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous; for whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God[1]?"

As if He had said, "It is vain and worse than vain for men to pretend to love God, unless they do those things which they know to be well-pleasing to Him. Nor, for the neglect of such things, is the weakness of our human nature an apology. Weak as we are in ourselves, there is, in our regenerate nature, a principle which enables us to be more than conquerors over the most terrible of our spiritual enemies, and the shield by which we may quench their darts is the faith which we cherish that Jesus is the Son of God."

[1] St. John v. 3, 4, 5.

But then, as if apprehensive of our resting in this bare and general confession, he proceeds to explain who that Christ is, in whom he would have us firmly to believe, and what grounds are afforded to us for receiving the peculiarities which he here ascribes to Him. "This is He," (that he is speaking of Christ the Son of God there can, I conceive, be no controversy) "This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood, and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth; and there are three that bear witness in earth," (I pass the controverted clause) "There are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one." It remains, then, that I should prove to you what the peculiarity is which St. John asserts of Christ, and to which he represents these three as witnesses.

There are three remarkable events in the history of our Saviour while among men, to some or all of which the apostle may be thought to have alluded. They are, first, His own baptism in the river Jordan, in which, as He commenced His mission and public ministry, so He may be fairly said to have come to us, in His official character, by water. Secondly, that violent death in which only, so far as we know, He was, in any sense, implicated with blood. And, thirdly, that remarkable effusion, after death, of both blood and water trom His side, which St. John has thought fit, in its proper place, to record with such solemnity of asseveration, and to which he

here again recurs with an earnestness so remarkable as to convince us that he regarded it as something far more than a natural phenomenon.

Now, if we were asked why these things were so solemnly and circumstantially recorded of Christ; why it was decreed in the counsels of God, that Christ should undergo these things; that He should submit to a baptism for which, in His innocence, He had no need; that He should endure a most painful death to which, in His perfect righteness, He was not justly liable; or that, lastly, a miracle should be wrought after His death, to produce a stream of blood first, and afterwards water from His body? I apprehend no answer could be so reasonably given, as that these things had some further and some mysterious meaning, that they were done for our advantage or for our instruction. And when we find these things so accurately and solemnly recorded, when our attention through the whole New Testament is so often called to them, and when, as in the present passage, we find an inspired apostle insisting on a faith in these things and in all of them, "not the water only, but the water and blood," as essential to "the victory which overcometh the world;" we must be still more confirmed in the opinion, that this meaning, whatever it be, must be one extremely important to us all, and that the actions thus recorded are something more than merely curious and interesting as proofs of our Saviour's humility, His fortitude, or the sincerity of His preaching.

But further, and as a probable guide to the import of such circumstances in the Messiah's life, it must be remarked that the Messiah was a Jew, that the prophecies, and the ceremonies of the ancient covenant were all in a strange and preordained analogy with His life and character; that in Him the laws of Moses were fulfilled, inasmuch as of Him they were only shadows; that His mission, though its benefits were to include all nations, was, in the first instance, addressed to the Jews; and that all which He taught, and all which He performed had, as its primary motive, their instruction, their conversion, their reconciliation with His Almighty Father. Whatever meaning then attached to these actions and circumstances of His life, it was one, in all probability, conformable to the ancient Jewish laws, and such as was obvious to a Jewish understanding; and there is, therefore, no way so likely to arrive at the truth, as to examine what sort of impression they were likely to make on a follower of Moses and the prophets.

And here it is very remarkable that water and blood were, in the religion of Moses, the two necessary tokens of atonement for sin, and purification from all guiltiness before God. Without these, by the law, no justification could be obtained. And these were inseparably united with the notion of an expiatory sacrifice; a sacrifice, that is, in which the death of one innocent being was accepted by the Divine justice, instead of the death of many guilty ones.

In every such ceremony both the victim and the priests were sprinkled with water before the former was slain or its blood was offered up to the Most High; and, the sacrifice completed, water was again sprinkled over all those who had partaken in the devotions. The first of these forms was, evidently, to represent that repentance which was required to cleanse the heart before the offering could be accepted or acceptable. The second was to show that by God's acceptance of the blood, He had washed us clean from our sins, and from all their dismal consequences. And so well were these circumstances understood, that it has been at all times a sort of proverb among the Jews, that "without water is no sacrifice," and that "the law begins with water and ends with water[1]."

If, then, a Jew had found it written in some of his ancient prophets that the Messiah whom he looked for was to come "by water and by blood," he would naturally suppose that these expressions referred to some great atonement which the Messiah was to offer up for the sins of His people. And, if he were induced, from other arguments and from the greatness of our Saviour's miracles, to acknowledge that our Lord was, indeed, the Messiah which should come, I know not how he could have reconciled the type and antitype any otherwise than by supposing that the whole ministry and death of Jesus was one mighty sacrifice for men; that as a necessary preparation for this sacrifice He was

[1] Grotius in loc.

baptized by St. John in the river Jordan; that the sacrifice was accomplished when He poured out His own blood for us on Calvary; and that from His dead side the Father Almighty thought fit to cause water to flow, in token that the expiation was accepted and entire, and that from Him alone who had atoned for our sins by His blood, were we to seek for and to receive that purity of life whereof water is the expressive symbol.

But that meaning which a Jew would have assigned to the passage in question, if it had occurred in one of the ancient prophets, we certainly are bound, on every principle of good sense and rational criticism, to apply to the same words as employed by one of our own sacred writers. It makes no difference whether they were predictive of a future, or descriptive of a past occurrence. In the latter case, still more than in the former, we are sure that they refer to Jesus; and as St. John was a Jew, and expresses himself, in the present instance, in terms expressly appropriate to the Jewish expiatory ceremonies, I really cannot see how an unprejudiced enquirer can escape from the conclusion, that a faith in the atonement for sin by the actual sacrifice of our Lord was, in his mind, an essential part of that faith whereby we are saved. The historical faith which acknowleges that, eighteen hundred years ago, a person named Jesus was born and founded a sect, lived about thirty years on earth, and was crucified; the unitarian faith which receives Him as a prophet sent from God, as the Son

of a virgin, as a teacher of pure morality, as raised again by His Father from the dead in order that, in His own person, He might afford an illustrious precedent of the resurrection,—both these, however one may in its clearness and its approach to truth far surpass the other, yet both fall short, very short of the apostle's estimate. It is not enough to acknowledge that He was the Son of God, unless we confess also that He came "by water." It is not enough to say that He baptized us to repentance, unless we add that He came with His own most precious blood, both to purchase for us a power to repent and to make our imperfect repentance acceptable. Nor, lastly, would it be sufficient to acknowledge the sacrifice of His blood alone, unless we acknowledged that our further sanctification depends on Him from whose torn side the blessed stream flowed forth to the cleansing of the nations.

To this doctrine the Spirit of God bare witness from the mouth of the apostles and in the many mighty works which showed forth themselves in them. To this doctrine the Spirit yet bears witness in those writings of the New Testament where its truth is described, as with a sun-beam, in language which the wilfully blind alone cannot see, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the Epistle to the Romans, and in the passage which I have this day, to the best of my power, explained to you. To this doctrine the water and blood bear witness; the water in which we are baptized in Christ's name,

and the cup in which is a symbol of His sufferings; of which both the one and the other would be altogether unmeaning or unintelligible unless we desired, in the one, to be "buried with Him by baptism into death[1]," and, in the other, to be made partakers in the benefits of His cross and passion.

The victory then, whereby we overcome the world, is a faith in the atonement for sin by our humbled and crucified Saviour. But, on the other hand, if our faith falls short of this illustrious victory, it is plain that our faith is imperfect, or that, from some fault in ourselves, it has failed to produce its proper effect on us. To those for whom Christ's blood was shed, to them from His side the waters of regeneration flowed. Those whom He saves, He also sanctifies. If we believe that His death has obtained pardon for our sins, we must also believe that His grace has quickened us to a life of holiness. And, if our actions do not show forth our faith, if our hearts be not right before Him, we may be sure that, so far as we are concerned, His sacrifice hath not yet taken effect, and that the curse of God is in force against our souls, pronounced against all them that work iniquity.

How greatly, then, does it concern those who detect in their own consciences the stain of unrepented and habitual transgressions, instead of flattering themselves with vain hopes of safety through a Saviour whom they put by their evil deeds to

[1] Rom. vi. 4.

open shame, to cry out for mercy while mercy may yet be found, and to seek by earnest prayer and diligent endeavours after righteousness, that purifying grace of the Most High which must quicken us, in the life which now is, before we can reasonably expect in the life to come, to be quickened from death to glory.

Nor do I know any way in which Christ and Christian holiness may more effectually be sought after, than by a constant recurrence to those solemn witnesses which He has left us of Himself, those Scriptures which are the express dictates of the Spirit of life and truth; those Sacraments which are so many renewed and repeated images of His death, His atonement, and His resurrection.

In our infancy we bare witness, by water, to the necessity of a new birth from sin; in our riper years, and more particularly in the last most solemn season of the Christian passover, we have most of us, I will hope, renewed our covenant with the Lord, and offered up to His service our bodies and souls, as redeemed by His blood from pangs unutterable and endless.

What now remains but a constant and earnest recollection, that the privileges and the duties of a Christian go always hand in hand; that the greater the mercies received, the more need is there of showing forth our thankfulness; that we do not cease to be the servants of God, when we are admitted to the privileges of His children; but that from these last, on the other hand, a more illustrious

obedience is expected, the service of love, the free-will offering of the heart, the ardour which endeavouring to do all, thinks all too little to repay the benefits received, and express the affection felt, and which, after a life spent in the service of its Lord, lays down at length its tranquil head to slumber beneath the cross, content to possess no other merit than His blood, and presuming to expect no further reward than His mercy!

SERMON III.

CHARACTER OF CHRIST AND HIS RELIGION.

[Preached at Madras, March 12, 1826.]

St. Mark viii. 9.

And He sent them away.

It is with these words that St. Mark concludes his account of the second occasion in which our Lord displayed His Almighty power, by multiplying a very small quantity of food into nourishment for many thousand persons. He had before, with five loaves and two fishes, satisfied the hunger of five thousand men; He now, with seven loaves and a few small fishes, afforded a sufficient meal for four thousand. And, having thus by a miracle relieved their bodily necessities, as He had by His preaching nourished and strengthened their souls with the bread of life, the evangelist informs us that "He sent them away;" a circumstance which I have chosen as the subject of our morning's contemplation, because, simple as it may seem, we may draw from it, by God's help, in the first place, a very important confirmation of the dignity and

disinterestedness of our Saviour's character, and of the truth of His Gospel; secondly, a striking illustration of the spirit and principles of that religion which He brought into the world; and, thirdly, a useful guide to our behaviour in the daily course of our lives, and an additional motive to the diligent practice of those duties, the discharge of which is the end and object of all religious knowledge.

"In those days the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples unto Him, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way, for divers of them came from far. And His disciples answered Him, from whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness? And He asked them, how many loaves have ye? And they said seven. And He commanded the people to sit down on the ground, and He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to His disciples to set before them, and they did set them before the people. And they had a few small fishes, and He blessed and commanded to set them also before them. So they did eat and were filled; and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away."

I have repeated to you the whole history that you may be the better able to judge of the meekness

and moderation of our Saviour, and how greatly His conduct differed from that which would have been pursued by a fanatic or an imposter. Supposing it, for the sake of argument, to have been possible that in these miracles of loaves and fishes, He could have been Himself deceived by enthusiasm or credulity, or, could by subtlety or magical arts, have deceived the enthusiasm and ignorance of His followers; supposing, I say, this to have been possible, which few men in their senses will suppose, yet is such a supposition in the present case rendered absurd by the total and evident absence of any interested or ambitious design which could have led Him to deceive others, or of any pride or vanity by which He Himself could have been deluded. If He had either designed, as His enemies accused Him of designing, to make Himself a worldly king, or if He had derived a vain and selfish pleasure from the number of His disciples, and the hosannas of a surrounding multitude, how little would He have been disposed to send that multitude away, instead of taking advantage of the favourable moments while their hearts were yet warm with the recollection of the miracle, to have secured the zeal and active services of those whom He had the power of thus strangely feeding. A leader who either possessed, or was believed to possess such a power might have filled his ranks with all the idle and needy of the land; and the multitude would have flocked into the wilderness for the bread which he distributed. But the views

of Christ were different; to His views His conduct was answerable; nor were either the one or the other different from what we should have expected in a Being superior to man; a Being trusting in Himself and in His Father alone, whom neither the blame nor praise of man could reach, alike above the mark of his hatred and his services. So far from priding Himself on the number and greatness of the miracles which He wrought, He does those miracles as things of course, and with the same degree of unaffected indifference with which a service of the most trifling kind is rendered by one man to another; He displays, almost uniformly, His Divine Power in works of mercy and loving kindness; and instead of collecting an army among His followers, and causing Himself, as He well might have done, to be proclaimed king over Israel, He actually dismissed two armies, one after the other, who were not only flushed with hope and inspired with the fullest confidence in Him, but were actually inclined, as we read in another chapter, to make Him king whether He would or no. Such a conduct as this is what no deceiver would have followed in his own person; nay, it may be pronounced with equal certainty, that our Saviour's character and behaviour, as described by the four Evangelists, are such as, if the Evangelists had been deceivers, they could not possibly have described or imagined. His is, in fact, a character of such perfect excellence and purity as no writer has elsewhere described either in history or fable,

and which it is absolutely absurd to suppose, that the Evangelists, being, as they were, unlearned men, and writing, as they did, separately and without collusion, could have conceived or painted, if the same original had not been before them all. If, then, the history which has been read to you be true, it is certain that Christ was, what He professed, the Son of God Most High; and that it is true we may be sure from the want of power in the Evangelists to describe such a person as our Lord from fancy, or to agree in imputing to Him a conduct so consistent with itself in every part, and in every part so different from that of other men. And this is the first observation which may be grounded on the words which I have read to you, namely, that they confirm our belief that Jesus was the Son of God, that all things which He hath spoken unto us from the Father are true, and that in Himself there is no falsehood at all.

The second observation relates to the tendency and character of the religion which He taught. That religion, above all others, which have been at any time offered to the world, is distinguished by its peculiarly practical nature; by its not drawing men away from the interests, the charities, nor, when used within due bounds, the enjoyments and pleasures of the present life; but by being a system of which it is the leading object not to take us out of the world, but to fit us for lives of innocence and usefulness in the world. It was the boast of ancient philosophy, and it has been the

boast of false religion and of the power of Antichrist, under whatever disguise presented to mankind, to withdraw men as much as possible from the cares and duties of a worldly and industrious life; to teach them to place their ideas of perfection and their hopes of salvation in a total retirement from mankind, or in an inactive and unprofitable round of ceremonies and superstitions, commanding to abstain from labour, which is the common condition of our kind; from marriage, whereby we contribute to the common stock of happiness and of productive labour, the enjoyments and toils of our children; from meats, which God Himself hath given to be received with thankfulness; from conversation, whereby the bonds of charity are kept alive, and the common fund of religious and useful knowledge extended and preserved. But the religion of Christ, as taught by Christ Himself, and the apostles who were inspired by Him, not only does not command, but expressly discourages all heedless singularity or solitude. If He calls us into the desert for a time to hear the words of life, He calls us only that we may return to the world better qualified to perform our parts in it; the more industrious in our lawful business, in proportion as we are the more fervent in spirit; and so much the better sons, the better parents, the better husbands, brethren, subjects, fellow-citizens, or friends, by how much we are the better Christians. It is in this manner that the connexion so often spoken of between faith and works is made abundantly cer-

tain and manifest; because in the Christian religion there is no single article of faith which does not immediately lead us to a necessity of some answerable practice. We believe in God, but this faith is not to be shown forth by us, as by many of the pretended wise men among the Indians, by sitting still, day after day, in the silent and fixed contemplation of that glorious Being, whose essence and attributes surpass the utmost reach of our minds. Our faith in God is an active faith, which leads us to pray to Him, and strive to please Him. Our faith in Christ is to be shown forth by loving Him, and, for His sake, loving each other; our faith in the atonement, which He has made for sin, is to be proved by our honouring His name not only with our lips but with our lives; our faith in a judgement to come is to be proved by being such men in all godly soberness as we desire the Lord of all things to find us at His return. We have promised, indeed, in our baptism, to renounce the sins and vanities of the world, but to renounce a due and temperate use of the world itself is neither desirable nor possible. Our business is to pass through its temptations and engagements like air through water, whose bubbles, though buried in the mass, still rise rapidly upwards, and keep themselves distinct from the surrounding element, till they find that Heaven to which they are tending. But to leave the world is not ours till death has set us free, and to each regenerate Christian, Christ seems to say in His Gospel, as He said of old to the restored

lunatic of Gadara, "Canst thou hope that thy new religion is to set thee free from thine ancient duties? Tarry not here under an idle pretext of serving me more entirely, but return to thine own city and thine own house, and by a diligent discharge of thy duties there, show forth how great things God hath done for thee[1]."

In a certain sense, then, the words which St. Mark applies to that mighty multitude whom Christ, after miraculously supporting their feeble natures, "sent away" to their respective cities, will apply to the situation of us all, when dismissed from the house of God, to put in practice the lessons which we have there learnt, in the bosom of our families, and amid the larger or smaller circles of our kindred, our friends, our neighbourhood. Each of us may consider himself as having repaired to this holy place to learn the will of the Most High, and to obtain His saving help towards its performance, and each of us, when he retires from the temple, is returning, it may be hoped, with an increased knowledge of his duty, and an increased power of performing it, to those familiar scenes where the course of his duty lies, and wherein his behaviour must determine whether he has truly profited or not, by his visit to God's house.

Let me entreat you, then, my brethren, to suppose yourselves for a moment in the situation of those persons who had been instructed by the

[1] St. Luke viii. 39.

preaching of Christ, and miraculously fed by His bounty, and whom, having thus imprinted on their minds the sense of their own duty and His own divinity, He " sent away" to their respective habitations. With what feelings, think you, would you, under such circumstances, have left the presence of the Son of God? Would the marvellous things which you had heard and seen, the proofs of power, the lessons of holiness, have been dismissed from your minds as a mere aweful spectacle to please the eye, a most sweet sound of the harp or the organ which, though pleasant for a time, left no instruction behind it? Would you have allowed your former sinful habits immediately to renew their sway, and have deferred all serious thoughts, all holy words, all actions of faith or prayer, till the time of solemn worship should again come round, and you should again meet Christ in the wilderness? Or would not your consciences have rather told you, that now the time was come to show forth the progress which you had made in His lessons; that as you hoped for His future preaching, it became you to prove that you had profited by that help which you had already received, and that it would have been better never to have consulted the Heavenly Physician, than, having affected outwardly to do so, to act contrary to all the directions which He gave.

My Christian friends, you have this day attended the worship of Christ, and have heard His Gospel read, and, so far as His ministers have been able,

sincerely and faithfully expounded to you. You have heard the solemn commandment of the Most High, and joined in prayer for strength to keep His laws. And I am persuaded that such as have asked faithfully and humbly for that merciful support and guidance, have obtained as really, though not so perceivably, the help and nourishment and comfort of God's grace, as the multitude, of whom you have heard this day, had their bodily wants assisted. All this has been done for you by Christ Himself, who, according to His promise, has been no less truly present in the midst of us, than if we had beheld Him seated on His rocky throne, dispensing, as to this multitude in the wilderness, the precious manna of the Gospel. We shall shortly, as His ministers, and in His name, pronounce His blessing on you, and "send you away." But is this all? does your duty end here? Oh no! We send you away that you may ponder in your hearts the truths which you have heard, and improve, by daily prayer and watchfulness, the grace which you have received. We send you away that you may show forth in your lives those principles which we have endeavoured to impress on your memory; we send you away as it were soldiers from their review, to prepare yourselves for actual service, and for a vigorous and victorious battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. We send you away, but in the hope that you may return again, after a week spent in the upright and persevering discharge of your different duties of parents, masters, children,

servants, friends, neighbours, husbands and wives; that you may return again with joy to renew your spiritual strength at the fountain of all power and godliness; and to bless that God who hath preserved you from a lost captivity to the power of sin, and hath covered your head in the day when you sustained the assaults of your ghostly enemies. We send you away, that by a daily practice of every good gift you may improve your principles and confirm your habits of holiness, that the work of salvation which you now begin in much weakness and trembling, may be brought to perfection by Him who mightily worketh in our infirmity, and who knoweth, even from the mouth of babes and sucklings to still the enemy and the avenger. Depart then in peace, and in the favour of the Lord; and that these our hopes may be realized, return not at once into the bustle and burden of life till, either publicly or privately, you have renewed your vows and your petitions. Give up some little space of this sabbath afternoon to the serious consideration of your condition, your hopes, your fears, your duties; into the examination of what sins they are to which you are most inclined, and against which you should, therefore, be on your guard more particularly; what company, what pursuits you have found most injurious to your souls, and how best they may be avoided or rendered harmless, giving up, in earnest prayer, yourselves, your interests, and affections to the service of God, and entreating Him that this coming week, at least, may be spent

without offending Him. So shall the dawn of each returning day bring increase of knowledge; so, when another Sabbath shall call you to these holy walls, you shall return in the increased favour of God and the clearer light of His countenance; and so, at length, when the last great Sabbath of nature is arrived, and He, who once fed the poor of the flock in the wilderness, shall return in His Father's glory to rule over Heaven and earth, He shall "send you away" no more, but cause you, world without end, to dwell in His Tabernacle, and before His face, that where He is, you may be also!

SERMON IV.

CHRIST PREACHING TO SINNERS.

[Preached at Dacca, July 4, 1824.]

St. Luke xv. 10.

I say unto you, that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

It was an accusation very frequently brought against our Saviour by the ruling party of the Jewish nation, that He showed in His preaching and daily habits an undue indulgence to sinners; that many of His disciples were taken from among men of this description; and that in meals and in conversation, He did not disdain the society of those whom the more rigid Pharisees condemned as impure and unholy. It does not, indeed, appear, however they might by loose and injurious revilings, attempt to stigmatize His character, that they ever brought against Him any definite charge of having partaken with sinners in their evil ways. The practice to which they objected was the simple intercourse, the act of conversing and breaking bread with sinners; and, in order to understand

the force and nature of their objection, it is necessary to take into account some of the peculiar prejudices of the Jews as to the touch or society of particular persons, as also who those persons were against whom these prejudices were directed.

In this country, I need scarcely mention, that it is a custom with those who pretend to any degree of holiness, to shrink from the touch of persons of a different religion, or of a character less devoted to the practice of contemplation and piety. Among the Mahommedan fakirs there are few who will willingly suffer their hands or their garments to be approached by a Christian, while the institution of castes is, with the Hindoos, carried to the height of absurdity, superstition, and inhumanity. Even the Jews, oppressed and degraded as they are in outward circumstances, show still, in all parts of the east, a considerable anxiety to withdraw from such contact or salutation.

The generality of this prejudice forbids our ascribing its origin to a source so circumscribed as the ceremonial law of Moses; nor, indeed, with all the precision of that law in declaring certain objects unclean, and prescribing a certain form of purification as necessary to every one who came in contact with them, is there any hint in the Pentateuch of such rules being applicable to opinions or moral habits, nor any justification of that intolerant fancy which led Simon the pharisee to doubt our Lord's prophetic character because He suffered a penitent sinner to embrace His feet and moisten His garment

with her tears[1]. The name of unclean is applied in Leviticus exclusively to objects in themselves disgusting, or which, for the sake of health, it was convenient to esteem so; the practice of the ancient Israelites, as displayed in the books of Kings and Chronicles, was very far from erring on the side of too great aversion from their idolatrous neighbours; and the custom of which I speak may be suspected to be of a later and far less holy origin; to have returned with the Jews from their captivity, and to have been strengthened during the Macedonian persecution; to have been borrowed from the semi-Indian creed of their Persian and Chaldean sovereigns, or to have been a natural consequence of that gloomy period of their history when, under the rod of Antiochus, and ill-treated by all mankind, the names of enemy and foreigner became to them, in the strictest sense of the word, synonymous. It is evident, however, that with persons who boasted their abhorrence of sin, it was by no means unnatural to apply to moral those rules which had been given for cases of physical pollution; to cry out to their fellow-creatures, "come not near, I am holier than thou," and to apprehend that the approach of a wicked, like that of a leprous person, made them unfit, for a time, to enter into a place of worship, or to offer up, even in private, acceptable devotions to the God of purity. Nor need we wonder that the Pharisees, in a tradi-

[1] St. Luke vii. 38.

tionary precept quoted by Drusius, are said not to have allowed "the people of the world to touch them," or that the disciples of the wise are forbidden in the Mechilta, to enter into the company of a sinner, even in order to pray with him or to study the Scriptures together [1].

Nor was it only to persons of notoriously immoral lives that this name of sinner was appropriated. The Heathen, the Samaritan, partook in the same opprobrium, and any transgression either of the law or of the traditions of the elders, which drew down on the individual so transgressing the penalty of being excommunicated, drew down on him at the same time the name of sinner, and an exclusion from the touch and fellowship of the godly. The publicans too, or collectors of the Roman taxes, were not only hated as the agents of a foreign tyrant, but accounted unclean from their habits of intercourse with the heathen; and every Israelite who had not joined himself to some particular sect or religious party, who had not, to use their own expressions, wallowed in the dust of the schools, and been initiated into those refinements on the Mosaic religion which the Essenes or the Pharisees inculcated, was regarded by both these sects with an intolerant pride, as "the people of the earth," and, as in the present instance "sinners."

It followed as a necessary consequence that, as other causes besides immorality might produce

[1] Drusius de iii. sectis. L. ii. p. 83. Mechilta, f. 37. 2.

ecclesiastical censures, as though many of the publicans were unjust and impious, that character did not necessarily or universally belong to them; and as the simplicity of the secular and unlearned Jew might be perfectly compatible with the most essential duties of industry, integrity, and piety; it followed that many were thus branded with an opprobrious epithet, who were, possibly, better men than those who affected to despise them. And it is certain that this description of persons contributed more than any other among the Jews to the number of our Saviour's followers. Such as were already cut off from the synagogues and people of Israel, had nothing to hold them back from embracing the truth whenever and by whomsoever offered to their acceptance. Those who surrendered no privilege, who broke no ancient tie, who deserted no long loved society, had a lighter cross to bear in the Messiah's kingdom, and found the narrow gate far wider than they who were folded gorgeously and warm in the trappings of self-love, and the distinctive mantle of a sect or a party. They who were unused to any notice from persons of a religious character, and who were abandoned, by the uncharitable contempt of their graver countrymen, to infamy, impenitence and despair,—it was likely that they would flock with joy to any door which should be opened to their restoration, and be willing to recover their lost self-esteem by any sacrifice which the Messiah might enjoin them. And our Lord, whose errand it was to reconcile the differences

and heal the intestine feuds of the house of Israel, appears to have taken delight in displaying His superiority to these unfounded traditions, and in kindly extending His charitable notice to those who needed it most and received it most gladly.

When taunted by the Pharisees for this line of conduct, He sometimes replies that He came "to save that which was lost," and that "they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick[1]." Sometimes, as in the case of Zaccheus, He reminds them that these sinners and publicans were children of Abraham as well as themselves, and partakers with them in God's promises. And sometimes, as in the parable of the prodigal son, and in that from which my text is taken, He lays down the broad, and to the Jews, the unusual principle, that not only is the penitent prodigal accepted by His Almighty Parent, but that he is accepted with joy; not only that he is admitted on his return, but that he is sought for during his wanderings; and that when found, there is more joy in Heaven on account of his repentance, than over the salvation of very many just persons to whom repentance was comparatively needless.

He appeals to the natural feelings and daily experience of every man, whether that which is lost does not, on that account, acquire an additional value in our hearts; and whether that which is recovered is not many times more dear to us than

[1] St. Matt. xviii. 11. St. Luke v. 31.

if we had always continued its possessors. "What man of you," are His words, "having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing; and when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbours saying, rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost! I say unto you that, likewise, joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance[1]."

The instruction contained in this parable is of two kinds, and addressed to two different classes of hearers.

The first are those happy characters whom our Lord designates by the name of the righteous, "the just persons who need no repentance." Not that any have existed, save Christ alone, to whom in some sense or other, and that a very cogent one, repentance has not been necessary. But they who have escaped the greater and more glaring crimes, who have, through good education or timely repentance, overpowered, in some considerable degree, the principle of evil within them; whom the habit of successful resistance has rendered superior to the ordinary assaults of Satan; and whom the grace of God, both prompting and helping their endeavours, has marked out, amid the wickedness of the

[1] St. Luke xv. 4, 5, 6, 7.

multitude, as faithful, at least, though not perfect followers of their Saviour; these just persons, so happy in their good name and their good conscience, may learn from the present parable and the occasion on which it was spoken, to cherish new feelings, and to observe a new conduct towards those unfortunate wanderers from the fold of virtue and happiness who are described as lost sheep, and the objects, on that account, of an especial solicitude on the part of their owner. They will learn from His conduct, who is our hope, our example, and our God, that far from shunning such persons as unclean, or abhorring them as heirs of perdition, it is their duty, as servants of Christ, to exert their utmost influence to snatch them from the intolerable dangers by which they are at present surrounded; and that they can no better prove their love for Him by whom they are redeemed, than by forwarding His gracious purposes concerning those whom it was the main object of His coming into the world, to enable to an effectual repentance.

Nor is this a task confined to any peculiar order or profession. It is the duty of the layman as well as of the priest, of the catechumen as well as of the teacher; and all who can supply a word of private warning against sin, or of private encouragement to repentance; all who have a prayer or a tear to give for the soul of a wicked neighbour, are as much bound to do their best to snatch that neighbour from sin and its consequences, as they

would be called on to pluck him out of the fire, or to prevent his walking down a precipice.

It is not, indeed, the prevailing fault of the present times, that the contact of sinners of a common degree is abhorred or shunned by those who think themselves righteous. Yet there is a smooth insincerity which carries itself alike with all; there is an indifference as to the moral condition of those with whom we live; and there is a readiness to desert and despair of those who have advanced beyond a certain point in the broad and beaten track which leads to perdition, as distinctive, perhaps, of the present day, as the superstitions which I have noticed were of the later Jewish republic; and as hurtful to the souls of men, and as opposite to the obligations of Christian charity, as the intolerance of the modern Turk, and the stiffness of the ancient pharisee.

We see our neighbour wasting his goods, impoverishing his family, destroying his health, and flinging himself, body and soul, into intolerable and everlasting misery, without a word or a look which can show we disapprove of his conduct, or a single entreaty to consider what he is doing and retrace his steps in time. We smile on his progress as he wades further in sin and ruin, and when, at length, he plunges out of his depth, and the stream hurries him away beyond those bounds of vice which the custom of the world has marked out as tolerable, then those who sport in the shallows of the torrent, and they that linger by its side,

alike grow zealous in the cause of morality and of insulted Heaven, alike begin to "shake their heads and whisper much, and change their countenances[1]," and call all mankind to witness their indignation against vice, and thank their God that they are not such as this man is, who went, if the truth should be told, but a few paces further in wickedness than themselves.

Many a man whom the neglect or flattery of his neighbours has consigned to incurable destruction, might, if those neighbours had, in the beginning of his wanderings, steppèd in with their advice, their entreaties, their prayers, have been preserved for ever in the sheepfold. And many a man, and still more, many a deceived and miserable woman, who had been given up by her former, and, perhaps, less strongly tempted associates, to infamy and to perdition, might yet have been recalled, when their situation appeared most desperate. A little unexpected notice from persons of unblemished character, a little advice conveyed with meekness and affection, a little confidence shown, and some little help or countenance given to enable them to begin their lives anew; these, or less than these, if administered with prudence and good will, and in a manner of which the motives admitted of no doubtful interpretation, would have opened many a heart which unkindness and despair had dried up and withered, and (unless they were entirely hardened and for-

[1] Eccles. xii. 18.

saken by God as well as by men) would, under His blessing and with His assistance, have preserved a member to society, delivered the soul of a fellow-creature from torment unspeakable, recovered a servant to his Lord and ours, and occasioned a day of joy in Heaven.

If any of those who hear me have an opportunity to try their generous zeal in such a task as I have now marked out for them, let me express an earnest hope that no unreasonable timidity, no culpable indifference will be allowed to interfere with a work so holy! Suffer not, I would say to a person thus situated, suffer not your unhappy brother to perish if your advice can save him. I do not call on you to become a public teacher, an intrusive and unauthorized censor of other men, occupied in detecting their faults, and vexing society with morose and needless admonition. But, in the moments of private intercourse, amid the confidence of private intimacy, there are times to be found, by whoever looks for them in sincerity, when the honest and affectionate counsels of a friend are worth more than many sermons. And do not, above all, when a wretched fellow-creature is given up as irreclaimable and not to be endured by that very world whose example first led him into transgression, when his heart is sick and can find no physician, and they who might help him lift up their voices against him, or pass by on the other side, do not, if you have any chance of re-

claiming such a creature, do not be hasty to abandon him.

St. Paul the apostle, during his abode as a prisoner at large in Rome, is related in ecclesiastical story to have met with the runaway slave of one of his friends who had robbed his master. Instead of giving up this unfortunate man immediately to justice, instead of hardening him by reproaches, or shunning him as pestilential or dangerous, the apostle undertook, it is said, the care and conversion of the reprobate; he received him into his house, and by the counsels and comforts of the Gospel, awakened in him a sense of his errours, and a faith in the great Redeemer of mankind. He did more; he persuaded him, as a proof of his sincerity, to return to his injured master, whom he, at the same time, induced to receive him again by that letter which is read in our Churches under the name of the Epistle to Philemon.

Onesimus, for this was the fugitive's name, did not disgrace his recommendation; he became a sincere Christian and a faithful servant, and in process of time, for his distinguished piety, was chosen a minister of the Church; he died a bishop and a martyr.

The means and language to be employed in the holy work which I have been recommending, must naturally vary according to a thousand various circumstances. Some may be "saved with fear, pulling them out of the fire[1];" over some a winning

[1] St. Jude 23.

softness may possess greater influence; continued admonitions and patient discussion may be necessary to subdue a third; while even the apparent displeasure and expressive silence of a respected and holy person may, with a fourth, be sufficient evidence of his danger. In general, however, it may be laid down as a rule, that gentle means and gentle language are much more likely to save a soul than menaces or harshness. These rather serve to harden men in sin than to draw their steps aside from it; they may provoke, they may terrify, but they seldom work an effectual or lasting change in any one. Better is it to imitate the conduct of the Heavenly Shepherd who, while He was found in likeness as a man, did not spurn the sinner at His feet, or reproach the publican at His table; who describes Himself as seeking His lost sheep diligently, but without anger or clamour; and as not driving, but affectionately carrying it on His shoulders to the sheepfold.

Do not, however, mistake me; when I recommend gentle means, I do not recommend guilty compliances. We must not humour our brethren in their sins, nor deceive them by the hope that their state is more secure than the truth will warrant. Far less must we, in order to gain their good opinion, become the companions of their evil deeds, or, even in appearance, countenance their false principles. By acting thus, we shall be so far from saving a soul, that we shall be the occasion of two souls perishing; our neighbour's, by confirming him

in his bad habits, and blinding him to the greatness of his danger; our own, by our deceitful flattery, and the infection of his sinful example. So long as the sheep is a wanderer it cannot be in favour with its shepherd; till it is found, there can be no rejoicing.

We should also be religiously careful lest our own conduct should bring our sincerity into question, since the sight of all mankind is keen to detect inconsistency in their monitors; and since, if our actions belie our words, it is vain to hope that our advice will be heard with conviction. And more than all, and for the sake not of our friend only, but of our own salvation, we should use the utmost care and diligence lest, while we give instruction to others, we ourselves should be cast away; and lest, while we boast ourselves the instructors of the weak, the dispensers of spiritual wealth to the needy, and the guide to them that sit in darkness, our own eyes may labour under a greater infirmity than that of which we undertake to heal our brother; and while we say we are rich and in need of nothing, we may find ourselves too soon in the presence of our Judge, both "poor and miserable, and blind and naked."

Of the instruction which the same parable conveys to sinners, a very few observations may be sufficient. The first which I shall offer is the great danger of sin, and the exceeding terrour of its natural consequences, which can so excite the pity of the Most High, and the sympathy of the holy and

happy inhabitants of another and a superior state of existence. That must be no common misery to rescue us from which the Almighty did not withhold His only Son; those effects of our wanderings must be strange and terrible, which can draw down on us the attention of the armies of Heaven, and call forth their lively joy at the rescue of a lost fellow-creature. The glory of the Most High might well spare the children of the world from the hallelujahs of Paradise; the happiness of angels is already complete without the addition of such beings as ourselves to their glorious company. It is only our misery which leads them to think of us at all; it is only our danger which makes our escape a subject of rejoicing. And if, with them who best know the value of a soul, our souls are thus valued; if to them who best know the fruits of sin, those fruits appear so terrible, how great is our infatuation who slumber on the brink of a precipice at which the far-seeing cherubims shudder, who defy the threats, who despise the warnings, who render vain the indulgence, the sufferings, the gracious influences, the patient and persevering kindness of the Almighty.

Nor are they our fears alone which are thus embattled against our continuance in sin; our hopes and our kindlier feelings are, at the same time, encouraged to a speedy and effectual repentance from the interest which the angels take in our success, and from the merciful solicitude which the God of angels and of men has Himself expressed

for our safety. For our race, when we had wandered aside from the paths of peace and happiness, for our race the Heavenly Shepherd left His ancient and faithful flock, the spirits who kept their first estate, the sons who were ever with Him. It was us whom He sought in the wilderness of the world; it was our nature, our infirmities, the punishment of sins which dwelt in our bodies, which He bare on His shoulders through the valley of the shadow of death, that He might bring us back to His Father's kingdom. And think you there will not be joy in the presence of His angels hereafter, when His toils shall receive their full reward in the restoration of countless millions, and when the sheep who have been lost and found again, shall return under His care to that fold from whence they never more shall wander? Or do we shrink back in hopeless despair of a prize so much beyond the limits of our natural weakness? "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom [1]." That repentance of a sinner in which the angels rejoice, that repentance which God Himself delighteth to behold, God, we may be sure, well knows how to bring to pass, and He will bring it to pass, unless the sinner refuses to be healed.

Day by day He calls us, saying, why will ye die? Day by day His Spirit is at hand, and to be found of all that diligently seek Him. Day by day He

[1] St. Luke xii. 32.

prompts the desire which leads us to His mercy-seat, the effectual prayer whereby we seek Him. Let us but fan that holy flame, which the breath of the Lord hath kindled; let us but seek His help where it hourly solicits our acceptance; let us but endeavour to forsake those evil ways of which death is the appointed issue, and that which the angels desire, and that which the Lord desireth, shall be surely and speedily accomplished, if we will but add our hearty desires to theirs, and meet, by our fervent prayers and penitent resolutions, the hopes and promises, and helps and consolation of Heaven.

SERMON V.

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

[Preached at Calcutta, November 30th, 1823.]

GAL. iii. 19.

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made.

THE main scope and purpose of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians, has been by many men so greatly misunderstood, and so dangerously perverted to purposes entirely foreign to the apostle's intention, that we cannot too closely bear in mind that the dispute between them was, whether the law of Moses was of perpetual obligation or no, and whether the observance of its ceremonies and sacrifices was necessary to obtain pardon for the sins of mankind? The Galatians and the great body of Jewish Christians, supposed that circumcision, that the refraining from swine's flesh, that the wearing their beards long, and a blue fringe on their garments, were observances with which, as they had been once commanded by God, no man had power to dispense with; and that expiation and forgiveness of the sins of the world were to be sought for

universally, through the means of the sacrifice ordained by Moses.

St. Paul, on the other hand, was taught by the Holy Ghost, that the laws of Moses were calculated only for a certain space of time and a particular race of mankind; that the distinctions which had formerly served to separate them from the Gentiles, became of no use whatsoever so soon as the Gentiles and the Jews were united in the bands of Christianity as "one fold" under "one Shepherd[1];" and that the sacrifices and ceremonies, which were only shadows of good things to come, became void and without obligation or effect when the One most pure Lamb of God had been offered for the sins of the world.

The nature of the dispute is grievously misunderstood by those who apply it to the value of good works in their modern and more exalted acceptation. The Jews were not weak enough, in general, to believe (though some vain and conceited pharisees among their number might have fancied it,) but the great body of the nation had not so extravagant notions of themselves as to believe that their own good works, or their observances of the moral law, were either so valuable in themselves, or so perfectly and steadily performed, as to purchase for them the inheritance of Heaven, or even a freedom from the anger of the Almighty. They had been taught by their own prophets that

[1] St. John x. 16.

"there is no man that sinneth not[1]," and they only erred in supposing that pardon for their sins might be procured by a diligent observance of the various ceremonies which Moses ordained, without regarding, or, at least, without fixing their entire attention on the One great and all sufficient sacrifice for sin through the blood of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

In answer to this mistake St. Paul was earnest in his endeavours to convince them, both from the nature of the law itself (which had, plainly, no value of its own, since the blood of bulls and goats had no natural power to remove sin,) and from the curses against disobedience contained in the law, (which the weakness of our unassisted nature could not escape, inasmuch as without some further divine help than the law afforded, no man could hope to keep the entire law unbroken,) and from the plain and undoubted reference which the ceremonies of the law possessed to a future Redeemer, that the law had, in itself, no power to save any man except through the imputed merits of a Saviour. And, on the other hand, that as Abraham himself had been declared righteous by God, through the same merits, before the law was given, it was plain not only that without those merits the law could not save, but that with those merits the law was not needed to save us. And it followed not only that the Jew had, no less than the Gentile, great need of the Christian atonement,

[1] 1 Kings viii. 46.

but that the Gentile, through Christ's atonement, might be in a state of salvation though he were altogether regardless of those ceremonies and sacrifices of the law on which the ancient Jew relied for pardon and acceptance.

But to this argument a natural objection was raised. "If the law be unnecessary, why was it given at all? If the promise to Abraham had reference to Christ and was sufficiently answered, both to Jew and Gentile, in His birth, sufferings, and resurrection, why did God think fit to publish the law to the children of Israel, and to publish it under circumstances of such exceeding majesty and terrour as are related in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of Exodus? God doth nothing in vain; an unmeaning or useless law He certainly would not have laid on us. Wherefore then serveth the law?"

To this St. Paul makes answer, that the law "was added on account of transgression until the seed should come to whom the promise was made." This is an answer which may seem to require explanation, and which will be found very amply to repay the pains of the most attentive enquiry that can be bestowed on it. It contains, as you will observe, two implied assertions: first, that the law was, in some way or other, called for by the transgressions of mankind; and, secondly, that it was only thus called for during the time which passed before the coming of our Lord, from whom, when He came, the offences complained of were to re-

ceive a better and sufficient remedy. Both these points I shall now endeavour to explain to you; and, first, in what manner was the law of Moses added "on account of transgressions."

There are three respects in which it may be said to have been thus appointed. First, as a rule of life and additional sanction of duty. Secondly, as a sacramental means of grace, whereby the former generations of faithful Israelites might be made partakers of that salvation which, in after times, the Almighty purposed to raise up to their children. Thirdly, as a looking-glass wherein our human nature might see reflected its own weakness and deformity, and so be brought, with deeper humility and warmer and stronger love, to lay hold on the merits of the Redeemer. All these I shall notice in their order.

First, the law of Moses was "added" to the world "on account of their transgressions," as a rule of life and an additional sanction of duty. The first men and early patriarchs appear, indeed, to have received repeated revelations from God of His being, His nature, and His attributes; and in the institution of sacrifices, and the prophecy that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent, they were not left altogether without some knowledge of the means whereby sin was to be, in after times, subdued and expiated. But, except in two instances, that of eating the blood of living animals, and that of murder of their own species, no rule that we know of was given for their conduct in life,

except that law of nature, that moral sense of right and wrong, that inward voice of conscience and of reason by which the heathen are, even now, as St. Paul expresses it, "a law unto themselves," and by which whoever is guided may learn "to do as he would be done by," and to govern his lusts and passions.

But that both the revelations which God had made of His own nature, and the feelings which He had implanted in the bosom of man, were insufficient to subdue the unruly wills and affections of our species, or to keep them from adding vanity and will-worship to the pure religion which they had, at first, received from their Maker, is certain both from the sin and misery which, in every heathen country, abound to a far greater degree than is suspected by Christians; and, secondly, from the fact that, so early as the time of Abraham, not only the greater part of mankind, but even the father of the faithful himself, before God had called him, were given up to the worship of false gods besides the True, and honoured the sun, the moon, the stars, and other creatures, instead of and more than the Almighty and ever blessed Creator.

For all these sins and for all this darkness of ignorance, God had, indeed, provided a cure in that blessed Mediator who was the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, and in the light of that glorious Gospel which He was, in the fulness of time, to reveal. But in the mean time, and while the wheels of salvation tarried in their course, it

pleased Him to abate at least, if not entirely to remove the nuisance, by giving a law which, though not perfect in itself, was well suited to the manners and circumstances of that age and nation for whose use it was principally intended; and, if it did not effect that which it was reserved for Christianity to accomplish, the purifying of "a peculiar people zealous of good works[1]," yet separated, at least, one nation from the grossest and most grievous of those sins and errours into which the Gentiles had fallen; and sanctified them to Himself as guardians of His name, and the depositories of those promises and prophecies which were, to the universal world, the charters of future salvation. As purifying, then, the Israelites from idolatry; as keeping them if not free from sin, yet comparatively free from the worst and most hateful practices of their neighbours; and as supplying a somewhat stronger ground of virtue than the law of nature could supply, the law of Moses may be truly said to have been "added because of transgressions," and to have answered the object of God as a temporary check to the overflowing of the offences of mankind.

Again, the law was added "on account of transgressions" as a sacramental means of grace, and a pledge of that great atonement whereby all the repeated transgressions of men were, at length, to obtain their pardon. We believe indeed that, from

[1] Titus ii. 14.

the first martyr, Abel, down to the good old Simeon, who prayed for his release from life on the birth of his Lord, and thirty years, at least, before the sacrifice for sin was offered on Mount Calvary, we believe that the blood of Christ had power to cleanse from sin those who looked forward to it, in faith, beforehand, as well as those who now, in faith, look back to it. And it is equally true that the sacrifices and purifications of the law had, in themselves, no power to put away sin, nor any value but what they obtained by a reference to the blood of the Messiah. But still they were seals and pledges of that mercy; still they were tokens whereby God assured the penitent sinner of His resolution to wipe away the guilt of the world; and the mercy of God which had determined Him to pardon such a sinner, led Him also to comfort and support him beforehand with the assurance of future pardon. Nor is this all, for as God hath ordained that the grace whereby Christians forsake sin should be sought for and received by them through certain actions, as baptism and the Lord's Supper, commemorative of Christ's death; so He also thought fit that the same necessary spiritual aid should be obtained by the house of Israel through ceremonies and sacrifices whereby that great sacrifice was prefigured. Thus it was then that the ceremonies of the law were to the Jew what the sacraments of the Gospel are to the Christian, a public expression of his faith in Christ's blood, "a means of grace and a pledge to assure

him thereof;" and this grace and this pledge were rendered necessary "because of transgressions."

Thirdly, the law of Moses was given "because of transgressions," as a looking-glass wherein our human nature might see its own weakness and deformity, and thus be brought, with deeper lowliness and warmer love, to lay hold on the offered merits of the Redeemer. In the law was shown forth the anger of God against sin; in the law were exhibited the purity and holiness which were necessary to purchase His approbation; and the difference which every man felt between his own character and this perfect model; and the impossibility which he could not but feel in himself to equal or resemble it, while they were sufficient to have driven him to despair if no atonement had been provided for sin, made him cling with ten thousand fold more of joy, and love, and thankfulness to that wonderful and precious atonement which God had prepared in His Son. The Jew, on looking on the law, perceived its spiritual nature, and that he himself was carnal, sold to sin. He felt another love in his members warring against the law in his mind[1]; he felt that he was unable of himself to merit Heaven or to escape the wrath of God; and when he was now ready to cry out, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death[2]?" he found on a sudden his condemnation withdrawn, his ransom paid, his chain of sin unloosed by the

[1] Rom. vi. 23. [2] Rom. vii. 24.

meritorious life, the redeeming sufferings, and the sanctifying grace of Jesus Christ our Lord! Well might his thankfulness be proportioned to the dangers from which he was set free, and blessed was that knowledge of himself and his condition which the law supplied "because of transgressions."

But all these ends which the law so excellently answered, these ends were temporary only, and lasted no longer than "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" that in Him all the nations of the earth should be blessed. The assurance and certainty of everlasting life and of a just and equal judgement after death which Christ declared to all men, and of which He gave an ample proof by His own resurrection, are a far more powerful sanction to the law of nature and conscience, and the purity of Christ's example is a far more perfect rule of life than any which were supplied by the law of Moses. The sacrifices for sin, which were "a shadow of things to come[1]," faded away at once when those realities were present which they only prefigured; and the forms which were proper as types of an expected Saviour were fitly replaced by that feast of thanksgiving, which became those who rejoiced in an atonement already offered.

The anger, lastly, of God against sin, and the purity which were required to please Him, were shown forth more strongly than ever in the dread-

[1] Col. ii. 17.

ful expiation which the sins of the world required, and the aweful fact that it was His own beloved Son, in whom *only* He was well pleased.

If then, we are asked, why the law of Moses was given by God? the answer will be, "It was added because of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made." If we are asked, whether we are bound to keep that law? we should reply that it was not given to us nor to our fathers, and that we live under a better covenant, and have, in the example of Christ, a better rule of life before us. If it should be further enquired, why, then, do we read the Scriptures of the Old Testament? we may answer, that we read them to confirm our faith in Christ by learning all that wonderful chain of prophecy which, from Adam to Moses, and from Moses to Malachi, fixed the attention of the world on Him before His coming; that we read it to increase our thankfulness, by comparing the glorious light which we now enjoy, with the dim and blunted rays which were cast from the veiled countenance of Moses; that we read it to quicken our godly jealousy, and make us more active in the service of the Lord, by observing the zeal which, with far less advantages than ourselves, the ancient patriarchs exhibited. If, lastly, the enquirer should ask what obligation we have, since the law of Moses has no weight with us, to the practice of moral and religious duties? let our answer be given, not only with our lips but in our lives, that the greater the benefits bestowed, the

more we are bound to show forth our thankfulness by doing, to the utmost of our feeble power, whatever may please our Benefactor; that the greater the pardon which we have received, the more should we fear to fall again into those sins which rendered it necessary; that the greater the salvation offered, the more offence and peril there must necessarily be in neglecting it. There is no privilege conferred in Scripture which does not carry along with it its corresponding duty. Christ only made the law of Moses unnecessary by furnishing us with stronger motives of hope and fear to the practice of the law of nature; He died for our salvation that He might, by the example of His love and the privileges which He has purchased, purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, and while He has given, both in His life and in His preaching, a perfect pattern of Christian holiness, He hath declared that not those who say Lord, Lord, but those who do the will of His Heavenly Father, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!

SERMON VI.

THE CHRISTIAN'S FAITH AND FEAR.

[Preached at Dum Dum, Dec. 4, 1825.]

ISAIAH li. 12, 13.

I, even I, am He that comforteth you. Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched out the Heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?

THE chapter from which these words are taken, is part of a prophecy intended to support and comfort the faithful worshippers of God in the kingdom of Judah, under the weight of those calamities from which, on account of the many sins and provocations wherewith the greater number of their countrymen had offended the Almighty, the nation at large, and even the few righteous among the many wicked, were to suffer. It is this small minority of humble and holy men whom the prophet calls upon in the first verse of the chapter. "Hearken to me ye that follow after righteousness!" whom he exhorts to take example by the unconquerable faith of their great forefather Abraham,

from whose loins, as from a quarry in an everlasting rock, their city and their nation had been upbuilded; who, (when the Lord had promised to make him, in his old age, the father of a mighty nation, and to give him for his inheritance a land wherein, while yet living, he only possessed ground enough for a grave) yet, having received these promises, believed against probability, hoped against hope; and disregarding all which man might reckon difficult or impossible, fixed his attention, his faith, and his earnest thankfulness on His power only who had spoken the word, and who both could and would, undoubtedly, bring to pass the thing which He had declared.

In like manner Isaiah encourages the faithful Israelites, in the midst of those most grievous calamities which, as he himself foretold, were about to overtake their nation,—however great and hopeless those calamities might seem, however unlikely or impossible the world might think it that the kingdom should ever again be restored to Israel, or Jerusalem be again raised from its ruins, or the people who had been carried into captivity be again brought back from their prison-house in the land of Shinar; yet, not for all these discouraging circumstances,—to be cast down or dismayed, but to believe and be persuaded that the Lord would still comfort Sion, that He would still make her waste places to be inhabited, and the courts of her ruined temple to ring once more with thanksgiving and the voice of melody. Nor is it only this restora-

tion of their people and political freedom, of which he bids them be thus confidently hopeful. He goes on to assure them that, in the restoration of Judah to their own land, there are other nations besides Judah concerned, that it was in the city, and among the people thus to be rebuilded and brought back again, that the Lord would bring forth to light that great salvation of the Messiah, the Son of David, (whose kingdom is so gloriously described in the seventy-second psalm) whose power was to extend to the most distant islands of the sea, to whom prayer and daily praises were to be offered up by all nations, on whose arm the Gentiles were to trust, and whom the Almighty had hid in the hollow of His hand, (or His mysterious and secret providence) as an instrument wherewith He was to renew His covenant with Sion, and to plant (as we read in the sixteenth verse,) on the ruins of a worn out and sinful world, a new Heaven and earth wherein righteousness should dwell for ever.

These are the gracious and glorious promises which the prophet Isaiah, by the command of God, intermixes with his threatenings against the people of Judah. With these he would have them comforted though desolation and destruction, and the famine and the sword should come unto them; though their sons should faint and lie at the head of their streets like wild bulls in a net; though their nation should be afflicted and drunken, with a worse drunkenness than wine, with evil passions,

with political fury, and the dregs of that cup of infatuation, trembling, and astonishment, which Divine justice pours forth to all those whose ruin is determined.

Notwithstanding these things he bids them hope for eventual deliverance. Notwithstanding these things he assures them "I, even I, am he that comforteth you!" And he gently chides them in the words of my text, "who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker that hath stretched forth the Heavens and laid the foundations of the earth?"

Having thus explained the connexion of my text with the rest of the chapter in which it is found, as well as the general meaning of that chapter, the first observation which I am desirous of making on it is, that the grace of God is never so far withdrawn from mankind as that, in any nation or great body of men, however the wicked may exceed the good among them in number, in power, and in forwardness; and however far gone this numerous, and powerful, and active majority may be in wickedness and defiance of God, there will not still remain a certain number of sincerely pious and faithful worshippers shining forth as a light in a dark place, and, however despised or overlooked by the worldling's eye, yet neither forgotten nor forsaken by Him who seeth in secret, and who hears the whispered prayers, and reckons up the

secret alms of those who seek to please Him only. It is thus that, when in a time of what appeared a universal abandonment of God, the prophet Elijah complained that he only was left alive of Jehovah's worshippers, he was told by that still small voice which visited him in Horeb, "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him[1]." It is thus that Isaiah allows that in the land of Judah, amid the multitude that went astray, "the Lord of Hosts had left a very small remnant[2];" and that he now addresses this remnant with words of comfort, as "ye that follow after righteousness." And it is thus that Christ has promised that, amid the different offences, divisions, and apostacies by which the Christian world has been and is still to be afflicted, He will still keep to Himself a faithful Church with whom His Spirit shall to the end of the world abide, and against whom, however small in number or humble in circumstances, "the gates of hell shall not prevail[3]."

A due consideration of this truth will be, in many respects, most useful to us. It will give us a better and more comfortable trust in the goodness and protection of Providence to know that, however to mortal apprehensions "the whole world lieth in wickedness[4];" however the tares which the enemy hath sown may overspread and overshadow the

[1] 1 Kings xix. 18.
[2] Isaiah i. 9.
[3] St. Matt. xvi. 18.
[4] 1 John v. 19.

fields, there still is good corn there which is known to the Lord of the harvest, for whose sake His dews may still fall, and His suns still shine, till the day of harvest be come, and the wheat and the weeds shall be separated from each other everlastingly.

It will teach us, also, a more comfortable and more charitable opinion of our fellow-creatures and fellow-servants, of whom, even under the most unfavourable circumstances, we learn that a certain proportion is always favourably regarded by the Most High; and instead of looking, as good men are sometimes tempted to do, on our neighbours and fellow-countrymen as profane, as worldly, as outcasts from grace, to hope the best of every man, and to regard every man either already a child of God, though we may not know it, or as one who may yet be made so by our kindness, our advice, our good example, and our prayers. And, above all, the reflection that we are not alone or friendless in the great battle which we are called on to wage against the powers of evil, that there are others who strive by our side, though the darkness of our present condition may prevent our discovering their numbers, that the same afflictions which we pass through are also "accomplished of our brethren that are in the world[1];" this reflection, I say, may strengthen our feeble hands, and confirm our weary resolutions; and we may feel

[1] 1 Peter v. 9.

ashamed to shrink from temptations and trials which others around us, with no more advantages than ourselves, have felt and are feeling, have endured and are enduring, have conquered and are conquering.

That the world then, bad as it may seem, and bad as it would be if left to the consequences of its natural corruption, has yet, through grace, been never left without a certain proportion of those, who, if not sinless, were yet faithful and accepted by God, is the first consideration which arises from the perusal of this chapter of Isaiah. Another is the fact that, however this small number of righteous persons are sharers, to a certain extent, in the general calamities which the sins of the many draw down on the communities to which they belong, they are not less the beloved of the Lord, and have, from Him, their many peculiar comforts in which the world does not partake, and with which, as a stranger to their hopes and principles, the world does not intermeddle.

It is probable, indeed, (and this is the reason of my saying that the righteous are only to a certain extent sharers in the general calamity of a wicked nation) it is probable that in very many instances the calamities themselves are tempered, as they fall, by God's providence in their particular cases; that His blows when they seem most undistinguishing, nevertheless strike those the hardest whose sins cry loudest for punishment, and that the sword of the destroying angel, though it does not spare

entirely, yet passes more lightly over the houses of the humble and the penitent. Thus Jeremiah, and thus Daniel, still more, though captives like the rest of their countrymen, found favour in the eyes of their conquerors, and thus when Jerusalem, after Christ's decease, fell a sacrifice to the sword of the Romans, the Christians who were in the place were so wonderfully delivered that not a hair of their heads perished. And thus in the greatest danger of our life of every day, the angel of the Lord is said to encamp about those who fear Him, to preserve them, if not from every evil, yet from the worst of those evils to which, without His help, they are liable.

But besides this greater share of God's mercy and protection in this life, (which is then of most value when the judgements of God are visibly walking abroad), besides this private and personal ground of comfort, the righteous have a still more blessed consciousness in the season of public distress and danger, inasmuch as their example, their prayers, and the acceptable service which they render to the Almighty, is often useful to others besides themselves, and may contribute in no small degree to the preservation of their families, their friends, and their country. If there had been ten such in Sodom the city would have been spared; and in the greatest and most terrible calamity that ever befell, or ever will befall a nation, the siege and ruin of Jerusalem, already mentioned, we know from Him who cannot lie, that not only the Christians

were themselves preserved, but their unbelieving countrymen, for their sakes, were punished with a less enduring misery. "Except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved; but for the elects' sake whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened those days[1]." Nor can a stronger inducement, in its class of motives, be offered to any man who loves his friends and country to apply himself to lead such a life as God approves of, than the hope that his earnest endeavours after holiness may give his prayers for them a value in the sight of that pure and holy Being, with whom the "fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much[2];" who gave a favourable answer to Daniel on the banks of Ulai, and who granted to St. Paul the lives of all them that were shipwrecked with him.

There is yet a consideration which must naturally tend to give courage and hope to the righteous in a season of general calamity, the recollection, namely, that all things which befall them are ordained by a wise and most merciful God, who knoweth what is best for His creatures, and can at any time, when He sees good, deliver them from the troubles by which they are now surrounded, or make those troubles themselves work to them for good, and to the bringing forth of an exceeding weight of future happiness and glory. Nor is this all; for as the faithful Israelite looked forwards, in

[1] St. Mark xiii. 20. [2] James v. 16.

the labours of his Babylonian slavery, not only to that appointed deliverance and return to their native land which God had promised to his tribes, but to the still more glorious deliverance which the Almighty should accomplish for his nation and all other nations of the world in the coming and triumph of the Redeemer, so has the faithful Christian, whose ransom from sin is already paid, and who awaits but the second coming of the Lord for his full and perfect release, so has he abundant reason to count all things as nothing which he may in this world endure, in comparison with that glorious hope which the Gospel holds out to him of "a treasure in the heavens that faileth not[1]."

It was this second life, indeed, to which, though with a dimmer light and a hope less sure and certain, the ancient Jew looked forwards,—as well as ourselves,—when, under the calamities of his nation, he fled to the promises of God for comfort. Without this hope the very promise which was held out of deliverance from captivity and of the glories of a future Messiah, would have little power in comparison to support the afflicted under the present burthens of his lot, or make the just rejoice on his death-bed.

I do not deny that the lover of his country might be glad to learn that her slavery was not to be perpetual; that the father of a family might feel considerable comfort on finding that, though he and his

[1] Luke xii. 33.

sons were to live and die in bondage, the chains of his grand-children would be broken; that the lover of mankind would be happy in the prospect of a Saviour to be born in after-times from the nation of the Jews and the family of David, who should undeceive those millions who had, till then, been fettered with the errours of a false religion, and the ceremonies of a foul and bloody idolatry. But there is evidently something more personal, something closer to the heart, and more immediately interesting to the feelings in that hope which Isaiah holds out as arising from the consideration of Christ's coming, and which was to support the righteous under the severest weight of national misfortune. And what could this be but the expectation that, lay down their lives in God's cause when they might, they should not lay them down for ever; that whether their bones were laid to rest in the distant land of their captivity, or consumed to dust amid the ashes of their burning temple, those bones should be clothed anew with flesh, and that dust should wake into life at the call of the promised Messiah; that fall where they might, their spirits should rest in peace, and that they should see their Redeemer for themselves, and "stand in their lot at the end of the days[1]."

But, if such was their hope on the promise of God alone, a promise less declared, less explicit, less positive and clear by far than those assurances which

[1] Dan. xii. 13.

are made to us in the Gospel, how much more should we depend on those stronger and clearer revelations of a life after death which the Gospel contains, supported as they are by the greatest proof which God could give of His power and will to perform them, in giving up His Son Jesus to death, that the debt of our nature might be paid in His blood, and in raising Him up from the dead as a proof that His atonement was accepted?

There is only one observation more which I shall make on the present chapter, and that is the moral consequence which, in the words of my text, is drawn from all the considerations of God's power and promises wherewith the prophet comforted his countrymen. I mean the fitness of an unshaken faith in God, and a fearless discharge of our duty under whatsoever calamities and against whatsoever opposition. It is a glorious thing to have a courage independent of chance or change; a breast from which the arrows of danger fall blunted, and which neither the rage of the people nor the frown of the mighty can turn from the line of wisdom and of duty. But this is, on every ground both of reason and Scripture, most likely to be the portion of him whose heart is right with God, who is firmly persuaded that all things are governed by Divine Providence, and who extends an humble but reasonable hope that his own life, his own best interests, his only happiness in this world and in the world to come, are the objects of Divine protection. "I fear God," it was the noble saying of a foreign

writer, "and I have, therefore, no other fear[1]." Such a courage indeed is often laid claim to in Scripture as the usual and distinguishing privilege of the truly religious. Of the wicked it is said in the book of Proverbs, that they "flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion[2]." "Are not two sparrows," saith our Lord, "sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." "Why are ye fearful, Oh ye of little faith?" were the words of the same Divine Person to His disciples in the tempest[3]. "I, even I am He that comforteth you," said God through His prophet to the pious Israelites. "Who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass?"

Still, however, "fear," it will be said, "is a natural and unavoidable passion. The protection of Heaven, though it is doubtless promised to the righteous in such a degree and such a manner as that all things shall eventually work for their good, and that they may be delivered from many evils which must otherwise befall, or supported in many which must otherwise overwhelm them, yet are they no where promised an exemption from all miseries, from their fair proportion of the natural evils of mortality, from pain, from poverty, from oppres-

[1] Racine, Athalie, Acte i. scene 1. "Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, et n'ai point d'autre crainte."

[2] Prov. xxviii. 1. [3] St. Matt. x. 29. 31. viii. 26.

sion, or from death. There are some sufferings, in themselves sufficiently terrible, to which the righteous in their present state of mortal imperfection are exposed as well as other men; there are some, if Christ's words be true, to which, even more than other men, and out of their very righteousness, and for the sake of Christ and His Gospel, the righteous are liable. And so long as God gives power to the oppressor to kill, diseases to vex, and hunger and cold to torment us, the mere present suffering which will arise from such causes is, in itself, a sufficient ground for fear in the breast of every one whose body is sensible to pain and privation."

I allow the reasonableness of the objection; I am ready to admit that it is only comparatively and not absolutely that the religious man can hope to be free from fear of worldly evils, and that the degree of his fear must in a great measure depend not only on the strength or weakness of his religious principles, but on the state of his nerves, and the degree to which he has been already accustomed to danger and suffering. But, if he cannot hope to get rid entirely of his fear of worldly calamities, he may make that very fear an argument for a still greater fear of Him by whom all good or evil are, in this life, ordained, and on whom depend the far greater and everlasting good or evil of the life which is to follow. Are we by our nature or habits so sensible to the loss of worldly comforts, that the dread of approaching poverty is enough to

make us melancholy, the dread of approaching disgrace to drive us mad? let us reflect how we shall one day endure the want of a drop of water to cool our tongues; with what patience we shall one day bear the scoffs and mockery of devils, and the eyes of the whole world and of all the angels of God, when our secret sins are made known in the day of judgement!

Are we so sensible of pain that we tremble at the bare apprehension of its infliction now? Let us ask ourselves how we shall like to dwell with everlasting burnings? Let us consider whether it be not an inconsistency, a madness even beyond the madness of Bedlam, to be thus alarmed at the smaller and so indifferent to the greater danger, to be "afraid of a man that shall die, of the son of man which shall be made as grass, and forget the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched out the Heavens and laid the foundations of the earth?" "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do!" but if ye must fear these, forget not that there *is* One who is more terrible than them all. "I will forewarn ye whom ye shall fear! fear Him which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell! Yea, I say unto you, fear Him[1]!"

[1] St. Luke xii. 4, 5.

SERMON VII.

THE CHRISTIAN'S TREATMENT ON EARTH.

[Preached at Calcutta, Nov. 1825.]

1 St. Peter iii. 13, 14.

Who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye!

This epistle was addressed by St. Peter to men under great tribulation, the converted Jews in different parts of the east, "the strangers," he calls them, "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia [1]." Strangers indeed they were, as dwelling in foreign lands and remote from their beloved Jerusalem; strangers they were, still more, to whom the world was an uneasy pilgrimage, who were the objects, if Tacitus is to be believed, of the common hatred of the human race, shut out in no small degree from the defence of the laws, and exposed on the slightest pretences, or on no pretence at all, to the heaviest lash of their severity.

Of the dangers and distresses to which the pri-

[1] 1 St. Peter i. 2.

mitive Christians were liable, it would be long, and with my present audience it would be needless to enter into a detail. But this notice of them was required to put you in possession of the general drift and tendency of St. Peter's arguments, which were directed, through a considerable part of both the Epistles which bear his name, to counteract and conquer the peculiar temptation to which a community thus situated were liable. For such men it was, in the first instance, a just and natural apprehension that their faith would fail under the weariness of hope deferred; that their courage would yield, and their spiritual sight grow dim, amid the calamities to which they were exposed, and the dangers which threatened their progress. Secondly, since every thing they did was taken in a bad sense by those around them, it might be feared, lest this want of a good name should make them careless of their actual behaviour; lest they should begin to neglect appearances in utter despair of persuading mankind to think well of them, and be tempted really to become the wretches they were accused of being. But, in the third place, the probability perhaps was greater still that, though their morals might remain unimpaired, their tempers might be soured and rendered churlish; that they whom the world hated, might begin, at length, to hate the world; and that they might endeavour to revenge their own sufferings on all around them, either by a general moroseness and peevishness, or by availing themselves of some of those opportuni-

ties which the disorderly state of the remoter Roman provinces supplied, to break forth in violence and rebellion.

The two former of these temptations St. Peter opposes in by far the greater part of his Epistles, where he encourages the converts to steadiness in their calling by pointing out the greatness and certainty of the promised recompence; where he extolls the blessedness of that celestial aid which the grace of the Most High affords to all that daily seek it; and where he reminds them, that their hope was for ever rendered vain unless the daily tenour of their lives refuted the calumnies of their adversaries.

The third temptation is that which he chiefly combats in the present chapter; wherein he exhorts them not only to be courteous and kind to men of the same persuasion with themselves, but to be gentle and forgiving even towards their worst and bitterest persecutors, in the confidence that they would thus not only secure the protection of the Almighty, but that, in very many instances, the hearts of their enemies themselves would be subdued by their persevering virtue and gentleness. "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you if ye be followers of that which is good? But, and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terrour, neither be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts."

In this latter argument it is plain that there are two distinct but not inconsistent propositions; first, that, even in this world, the probability is that the faithful and peaceable follower of Christ will not be molested; secondly, that if it should so happen that we are molested for the sake of our righteousness, we have, on this very account, an additional reason for gratitude to God, and for reliance on His help and blessing.

The first of these assertions (so far as the mere abstract probability of the case extends) might seem at first sight to be a thing so clear as to require very little argument to prove it. Few, even in comparison, are found of a temper so utterly devilish as to desire to injure their neighbour without some received or fancied provocation. But as the consistent follower of righteousness gives no just ground of provocation to any; as, on the contrary, his life, so far as his means extend, is occupied in doing good to all, it might be reasonably hoped that his innocence would, amid the strifes and ambuscades of the world, be his helmet, his sword, and his shield; and that he who was the friend of all would, at least, have no one for his enemy. It is plain, however, from the words of St. Peter himself, that this statement of the case must be taken with very considerable exceptions; since, even while he asks the question, "who is he that shall harm you?" he hypothetically subjoins, "but and if ye be persecuted." Nay more, when he adds, "if ye be persecuted for righteousness sake," he admits that

they, to whom he was writing, might be exposed to violence and injustice, not only in spite of their innocence, but actually in consequence of it.

It is, indeed, not more strange than true, that there is a principle in every man's nature, which induces him to dislike whatever differs from himself; and that this dislike is stronger in proportion as we doubt the wisdom of our own choice, and suspect that we are wrong in those circumstances, whereby we are distinguished from such as are of a contrary opinion. It is this which has made many men intolerant towards other and new religions, who all the while have been conspicuously and glaringly negligent of their own; it is this which, even where the forms of belief have been the same, has continually led the worldly man to revile and detest the superior strictness of his pious neighbour, and to exclaim, in the words of the eloquent author of the apocryphal book of Wisdom, "He is not for our turn;" he is grievous "unto us even to behold, for his life is not like other men's; his ways are of another fashion[1]." "If ye were of the world," said He who well knew what was in man, "if ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you[2]." Nor can it be a subject of wonder, that from these and other similar passages in the Holy Scriptures, very many have been led to believe that every sincere Chris-

[1] Wisdom ii. 12. 15. [2] St. John xv. 19.

tian is inevitably exposed to the scorn and malice of his unconverted neighbours, and have consequently been compelled to explain away, in a most unsatisfactory manner, the expectation expressed by St. Peter, that, even in the present life, and in the present evil world, our following that which is good, is likely to preserve us from injury.

This belief, however, when entertained without due qualification, is, I am convinced, not only a mistaken but a mischievous one. It has led some good and humble men to doubt, very causelessly, of their own spiritual state, and their acceptance with the Almighty, because they have not been able to say with truth, that they were either so unhappy or so much hated among mankind as they conceived to be a necessary evidence of their conformity with the Son of God. It has led some of a more sanguine turn to make much of little sorrows, and glorify themselves as martyrs under little or imaginary grievances, while others whose own imprudence or inconsistency have been the cause of the rough treatment they have met with, have been encouraged in their errours, and hardened in their unruly temper, and have appealed to the opposition which they encountered as a proof that they were the genuine followers of the meek and gentle Jesus. And I am anxious, on these accounts, to examine the grounds of an opinion so uncomfortable, and which tends to throw a fresh and unnecessary difficulty in that path of life which is, of itself, sufficiently steep and thorny.

One main part of the errour appears to arise from a too strong estimate of the corruption and depravity of mankind. That mankind are, indeed, in a forlorn and fallen condition, that they are, by nature, strangers to God, and very far gone from that glorious likeness of Himself in which He first created them, is, unhappily, most true, and God forbid that we should ever lose sight of it in our sorrowful and daily recollections.

But that, in this depravity of the natural man, no kind or amiable quality remains, that he is so far sunk below the beasts that perish, as that pity cannot move, nor justice awe, nor kindness conciliate him, that he universally, or even usually, delights in evil for evil's sake, and that where no prejudice or interest intervenes, he is unkind, uncourteous, or ungrateful, is certainly that which I find no where written in the Book of Truth, and against which, the book of nature and experience appears to bear abundant testimony. The very weakness of man indeed (and his weakness is, in this instance, a blessing) forbids his being consistent and uniform in vice any more than in virtue. And there are many countervailing circumstances, such as the weight of public opinion, the vacillation of men's own opinions, the feelings of worldly prudence, and the approbation, often involuntary, of whatever in other men is disinterested, kind, and lovely, which will very often be the means, under God's providence, of making the enemies of the righteous man his friends, and keeping the followers of that

which is good from being materially harmed by any one.

I say under God's providence, because it must be further borne in mind that, however wicked man may be, and however entirely his heart may be bent on mischief, still that heart is in the hand of the Lord, the same Lord whose eyes are over the righteous, and His ears open unto their prayers, whose defence and shield may well be trusted for the safety and happiness of them that love Him. It is His apostle, it is His Holy Spirit who speaks to us in the words which I have quoted, and, with whatever exceptions these gracious assurances may possibly be qualified, the righteous man may yet found on them a probable hope, even in this life, of seeing good days, and being safe from those that would harm him.

I know it will be answered, that both reason and Scripture are, on the whole, against our conclusion. In private life even the best of men have their enemies, their slanderers, their revilers; and the general history of religion we find to be made up of little else than a series of horrours and cruelties inflicted by the wicked on the righteous; and sometimes on no other account, so far as man can discern, than that silent reproach which their good examples have given to the opposite lives of their persecutors.

The first murder which the world ever saw was occasioned by a difference of this kind. The prophets of ancient times, of whom the world was not

worthy, were scourged, imprisoned, sawn in sunder, and slain with the sword. St. John the Baptist lost his head because he persisted in warning Herod of his wickedness; and the best and wisest of beings, the Son of God Himself, who went about doing good, and against whose pure and perfect character the malice of His enemies could find no colourable aspersion, was taken in His innocency and doomed to a death of torture. Accordingly the same Divine Lord has left as a legacy to His disciples the painful reversion of His stripes, His thorns, His agony, His bitter tears, and commanded each of us, as a pledge of our sincerity in His service, to "take up the cross," before we can presume to account ourselves His followers.

I answer, that these cases of persecution for righteousness sake are exceptions, and very great and aweful ones, from the general rule which St. Peter lays down; but still they are exceptions only. They apply to a body of persons numerous, indeed, in themselves, but, thank God! very small in proportion to the total number of that mighty multitude who are redeemed from sin and misery by the blood of the Lamb, and the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. Of these by far the greater number will be found to have gone down to their graves in peace and in favour with both God and man; too happily obscure for the axe, the sword, or the fire, or protected from such dangers by the prevalence, the nominal prevalence at least, of those very doc-

trines, to plant which their heroic precursors thought their blood a trifling sacrifice.

Even in the age when martyrs were most numerous, a few thousands out of the whole populous family of Christ, afford no very formidable aggregate; and how many ages have since passed away in which martyrdom has been unknown, and the mighty of the earth have, from the oppressors, been transformed into the nursing fathers of Christ's religion! It is, doubtless, true, that Christ speaks of His cross, in general terms, as that condition of His service which we must be all of us prepared to encounter, and bear with us boldly and cheerfully. And it is also true that the uniform manner of our Lord (as it would be the manner and the duty of every experienced person preparing another for the duties and dangers of a new profession) is to state those duties broadly and strongly, to the end that no one might treasure up disappointment for himself by too flattering and easy a picture of the arduous undertaking before him. But if I were preparing a young seaman or soldier for the toils he must expect to undergo, if I were painting to him the various bitter accidents of flood or field, the wounds and the watchings, the hunger and cold, the toil and thirst, the storms, the rencontres, the defeats and the captivities, the

—— dura navis,
Dura fugæ mala, dura belli,

would it be fair to understand me that all these or

any of these calamities were necessarily to befall the individual whom I was addressing; that no seas were ever calm, no voyages ever prosperous, and that no military man was known at any time to descend to his grave in peace, and with his children weeping around him? Such visitations, like the persecutions foretold in Scripture, are spoken of as impending over all, because they are such as may happen to any, and because all should, therefore, be prepared, if they come, to meet them boldly. But it would be a strange seaman who, during a prosperous voyage over an untroubled sea, should cry out before every ruffle of the elements as if it were St. Paul's euroclydon. And it is, surely, a strange and unthankful trifling with God's mercies and our own experience to talk of afflictions in His cause, when no man, on that account, either makes us afraid or troubles us, and when those lions have, by His Providence, been long since chained, which used, in ancient days, to scare the pilgrims in their journey to the New Jerusalem.

"But does not," it will be rejoined, "in common life, and in those smaller distresses which every day brings forth, and which determine the general character of our journey far more than the greater but less frequent dangers to which you have alluded; does not experience shew that genuine religion is still, to the generality of mankind, the object of dislike, and, so far as the present circumstances of the world will admit, of persecution? Is not the child who prays to God, and reverences its parents,

exposed too often to mockery from its idle companions? The young man who is sober and chaste, is he not ridiculed for want of spirit? is not the devout man of riper years too often charged with hypocrisy? and are not many of every age to be found who have been disliked or ill-used on account of their piety?"

I answer that all this is very true, and a treatment like this may very possibly befall any one of us in his journey through the wilderness of the world; but still these are exceptions from St. Peter's general rule, and such exceptions will be found less numerous than they at first appear, if we distinguish those sorrows and vexations which good men endure on account of their religion, from those which they might have experienced whether they were religious or no; and those, still more, which they bring on themselves, not by their religion, but by their imprudence and their failings. Christ's kingdom is not of this world; and no promise that I can find in Scripture has been made to His followers, that they should have less than their share of the common accidents of their nature; that a ruin tottering to its foundation should necessarily remain suspended while a Christian passed beneath; that a Christian should not slip, where another man should break a limb; or that a Christian should not be stripped by robbers, or torn by wild beasts, like any other man who might pass from Jerusalem to Jericho. Christians are men, and sinful men, and they require, no less than their fellow trans-

gressors, that merciful discipline of affliction and sorrow which the Almighty dispenses, more or less, to every man as He sees occasion. But how many are those who, while drinking the cup which sinners partake of at least as plentifully as themselves, are forward to claim the praise of martyrs or confessors, and to reckon up these visitations as parts of that cross which it behoves us to be ready to take up when called on!

Still more must we be careful lest the sorrows under which we groan be brought on us, not by our religion itself, but by our vanity, our ill temper, our want of common prudence, and of that serpent-like wisdom, to join which with the harmlessness of a dove should be the endeavour of every believer. Such defects as these by their nature provoke mockery, dislike, and injustice from all whose hearts are not impressed with a deep sense of their own weakness, and the necessity of bearing with the weakness of their brethren. And when a religious man shews his religion in an injudicious manner, when he makes it the occasion of judging and censuring others, or when he exhausts it in forms and trifles, (overlooking, it may be, in comparison, the weightier matters of the law while he strains out the gnat, and pays tithes of anise and cummin) though his religion might, by itself, have passed through life unnoticed, or respected, or endured, these faults will be reflected on with double severity, because they are at variance with his professed principles, and because the world, it must be

owned, will not be sorry to bring down his character to its own low level.

But do our opponents appeal to the experience of mankind? To that experience let them go! Let them ask themselves whether, among their own acquaintance, their own neighbours, the public men whose lives and circumstances are known to them, there is any considerable appearance of such persecution as they apprehend, such affliction for conscience sake as is implied in their gloomy anticipations? Is the sober, the honest, the religious labourer less employed by his superiors in rank, or less thriving in the world than his godless neighbour? Among merchants, among statesmen, I will add, among the followers of the naval or military profession, will it usually be found, (for some detached and remarkable instances are no sufficient proof of the general rule) that a man's religion has done him any harm? Why, then, should we dress up the confession of our faith with these unreasonable and unnecessary terrours, or doubt that, even in this world, as well as in the world to come, and in the necessities of the present life, as well as in the one thing eternally needful, the Lord of all things may, if we seek His help, make our very enemies to love us, and those, of whom we fear that they should carry us captive, to take pity on us?

As, however, situations may arise, in which we may be called upon, we know not how soon or how suddenly, to prefer our duty to our interest, and to

suffer for righteousness sake, it is fit to keep our hearts in constant readiness for such a trial by the assurance, which should be deeply impressed on them, that such afflictions as, on this account, befall us are, by the concurrent assurances of God's words, among the surest earnests of His favour. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake! Rejoice, and be exceeding glad,—for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you[1]!" "Rejoice," saith St. Peter, "inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy[2]."

And the reason for such joy a little consideration will suggest to us. In the first place, such persecutions, wherever they recur, are so many fulfilments of our Saviour's prophecy that men should thus deal with His followers for His name's sake; and they are, in consequence, so many confirmations of our faith in Him, and so many fresh grounds of hope that, as the sorrows which He foretold have come true, the far greater joys which He has promised, will, in like manner, come true also. No other religion which the world has known was announced with such forebodings. The pretenders to inspiration have usually, if not uniformly, amused their followers with hopes of unmixed success and

[1] St. Matt. v. 11, 12. [2] 1 St. Peter iv. 13.

universal extension; and the failure of their hopes has demonstrated the folly of their assumptions.

Our Lord promised His people affliction first, and weight of glory afterwards. The affliction has arrived, yea, in a great measure, has passed away; the glory will therefore follow!

Secondly, since God has shown afflictions to be so precious in His sight, as to conduct His only Son through the same thorny passage to His present exaltation of Majesty, we may well feel ourselves honoured in being made to resemble Him, even in the circumstances of His humiliation; and that we are thought worthy to be His companions in working, by the same means, the same glorious will of His and our Almighty Father. The soldier who sleeps on the bare field of battle, feels elevated in his spirit so that his general lies no softer; and shall not we in our necessities, sometimes think with a holy joy that, even in these things, God hath made us like His Son?

Thirdly, when we recollect, that the greater our sufferings are now, and the more courageously we pass through them, the more our faith is proved, our love rendered brighter, and the more exceeding weight of glory and reward is, for Christ's sake, laid up for us hereafter, may we not rejoice in our distress as a pledge of God's gracious designs in our favour, as a gate to greater eminence and far higher seats in His kingdom, than are to be attained by an easier entrance? Strange things are told in the early Christian writers of the glories

and the nearer and more immediate access to the Lord, which those who were killed for His name's sake should receive from Him. And be these as they may, yet, doubtless, a more than common happiness is laid up, not for the martyr only, but for every one, in proportion to his losses and trials in the cause, who, though he has borne a lighter and less illustrious cross, has still borne cheerfully whatever cross his Master has given him to carry. We know of men in hard and dangerous professions, who rejoice when sent on services of still greater danger and hardship, as knowing that where peril is, promotion may also be found; and the sufferer for conscience sake may, much more, exult in his trials, as knowing that, in the strength of God's grace, He will come off even more than conqueror.

But, fourthly, lest all these hopes should fail us in the hour of danger, it is wise, nay it is most needful, to accustom ourselves to frequent self-denial, even in lawful indulgences; to obtain, by frequent exercise, a complete mastery over ourselves; by a constant study of God's word to store our minds before-hand with a deep sense both of His threats and of His promises, and by daily meditation and prayer to accustom our thoughts to the constant spectacle of Christ on the cross, entreating His grace to frame our minds into the likeness of His Heavenly temper.

So shall we fear God; and, fearing Him, be fearless of all besides:—so shall we love God; and, for His sake, count all the world as dross in com-

parison of His services;—so, amid the changes and chances of this mortal life, shall our hearts be there fixed where unfailing joys are to be found; and where all which now distresses us shall appear but as a painful dream when we awake from sleep refreshed and thankful, and the light of Heaven's great morning beams in through the windows of the sepulchre!

SERMON VIII.

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

[Preached at Ghazeepoor, August 29, 1824.]

St. Luke xviii. 14.

I tell you that this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

The parable of which these words form the conclusion, was spoken by our Saviour, as the Holy Scripture itself tells us, in reproof of certain persons who "trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others;" and of the persons, accordingly, whom He sets before us, the first is of a class of men who, more than all others among the Jews, enjoyed the reputation of a strict and scrupulous piety; while the second was from a description of persons, many of whom were, really, of depraved and infamous behaviour, and all of whom, from the prejudices of their countrymen, were regarded, whether justly so or no, as depraved and infamous. "Two men," are our Lord's words, "went up into the temple to pray; the one a pharisee, and the other a publican."

The pharisees, it may be here necessary to observe, were a party among the Jewish nation whose name is taken from a Hebrew word signifying division or separation, because they had divided themselves in many circumstances of dress and manners and society from the generality of their brother Israelites, and of those who worshipped the same God with them in the same temple, on pretence of superior holiness, and of keeping themselves altogether unspotted by the company, the amusements, and even the touch of carnal and worldly persons. They were famous among their countrymen for their dislike of all diversions, however innocent, for the length of their prayers and of their graces both before and after meat, for their rigid observance of the Sabbath and fasting days appointed by the law of Moses, and by the zeal which they showed for not only the slightest observances recommended in that law, but for many other additional rules and restrictions which, though the law said nothing of them, they professed to have received from the tradition of the elders. Thus the law respecting the Sabbath, in itself strict, they straitened still more by forbidding men so much as to heal the sick on that day, to take physic themselves, or to give physic to others. On fasting days they not only refused to eat all food before the appointed hour, but if they took a draught of water took care to strain it through a cloth, lest any thing solid might lurk in it, and be accidentally swallowed. The blue fringe which it was the cus-

tom of the Jews in general to wear on their clothes, the pharisees wore twice as large as other men, in order to prove that they were not ashamed of their religion; and their wrists and foreheads were usually bound round with strips of parchment written over with texts of Scripture, "to keep," as they said, "the law of God before their eyes, and to prevent its ever escaping from their memories."

On the whole, as their manners and appearance were formal, grave, and melancholy, so they chiefly lived among their own members, calling themselves in their books and in their general conversation, "the godly," "the elect," "the wise," and the "disciples of the elders;" and shunning not only the company, but the touch and the neighbourhood of those who did not belong to their own little circle, and of whom they therefore spoke as "the men of the world," "the unclean," and "the vulgar," or "unenlightened."

With all these pretences to piety, many grievous crimes, as it appears from Scripture, prevailed among them. Many of them were extremely covetous; and even made their outward piety a means of obtaining wealth and legacies from their countrymen; "devouring widows' houses under the pretence of long prayers;" and "making clean the outside of the cup and the platter, while the inward part was full of ravening and wickedness [1]."

But though such faults were but too common

[1] St. Matt. xxiii. 25. St. Luke xi. 39.

among them, and though our Saviour, therefore, reproves them perhaps more sharply, and certainly more frequently than any other party among the Jews, (possibly because from their numbers they oftener fell in His way; and possibly because, with all their faults, they were more within the ordinary reach of grace than their wicked and godless rivals the Sadducees,) yet they had, when compared with these last, many favourable circumstances in their character, and many among them were really good and godly men who, when their prejudices were once removed, became sincere and humble followers of the Messiah. They had kept entire the ancient and true doctrine of a resurrection from the dead, which the Sadducees ventured to deny; they were really zealous, though not according unto knowledge, for the honour of God's name and the observance of His Sabbaths; they were commendably anxious in spreading a knowledge of the law of Moses among the heathen and their own ignorant countrymen; and they were accordingly held in great reverence by the common people; and the scribes or teachers of the law of Moses, as well as the rulers or elders of the people, were most frequently of their number.

Of the publicans it is enough to say that they were collectors of taxes for the Romans, who, some time before, had conquered the Jews and held them in the same state of subjection, though of a far less just and gentle kind, than that in which the English now hold the inhabitants of India.

And it is easy to suppose not only that any Jew who undertook such an office would be extremely unpopular among his countrymen; but that, in fact, the more respectable Jews would, generally speaking, be slow to hold an office which at the same time made them hated by their own brethren, and exposed them to lose caste by living and eating with their heathen masters.

When, therefore, our Lord fixed on two persons of these different descriptions as going together to the House of God to pray, He fixed on characters the most different that His countrymen had seen, the most popular and respected and the least esteemed, the most outwardly careful of their religious interests and the most outwardly and generally neglectful of them; the class who were supposed in general to be most dear to God (and who certainly supposed themselves so) and those who were considered the greatest strangers to Him. And if we ourselves had been, with the same feelings and prejudices, among the number of our Saviour's hearers, and had been asked by Him, which of these two persons was in our opinion most likely to obtain a favourable answer to his prayers, and to conciliate the mercy of Heaven, we should have probably supposed, as the Jews no doubt supposed, that the advantage was decidedly with the pharisee.

"The pharisee, (however, the story then proceeds,) the pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even

as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner! I tell you," adds our Lord, "that this man went down to his house justified rather than the other!"

What, then, is the cause of this difference? What of the pharisee being rejected, what of the publican being, in comparison, preferred by the Almighty searcher of hearts? Was the pharisee a hypocrite, who laid claim to virtuous habits to which he had no pretension? Was it untrue that he was really strict beyond most of his countrymen in the mortification of his appetites, and the payment of a part of his substance to the service of God and the ceremonies of religion? *That* it would be hard to believe, nor have we any reason to believe it from the words of Scripture. He was, it will be observed, praying, and praying in words which nobody heard—"he prayed thus *with himself*." But no man is weak enough to believe that he can tell a lie to God; no man, who is not a madman, can dare to insult his Maker by laying claim, when that Maker only hears, to virtuous actions which he knows to be imaginary. Or is God indifferent whether our actions be good or evil?—are prayers, or fastings, or a careful concern for the decencies of religion offensive to Him, or worthless in His eyes? On the contrary, our Saviour Himself has laid down rules for His disciples when they fast;

He has Himself set us an example of religious fasting; and He has Himself said, when blaming the pharisees for their neglect of the weightier matters of the law, that, while they sinned greatly in leaving these undone, it behoved them also by no means to neglect the others[1].

Or was the publican, in reality, a person of exemplary conduct who afflicted himself unnecessarily on account of his spiritual state, and was, in truth, already a saint while he condemned himself as the worst of sinners. Neither of this is there any appearance. The pharisee, who seems to have known him, probably spoke the truth when he described him as a man of bad character. And it is remarkable, that neither does our Lord, notwithstanding his expressions of repentance, speak of him as of one, at present and absolutely in a justified state, but only that he was justified *rather* than the other, that his character, with all its faults, was less displeasing to God than the vain self praise and uncharitable censure of the pharisee. The publican might be, and probably was, a real sinner; the publican might be, and probably was, of a character offensive to God; and yet the pharisee might, in God's eyes, be still less accepted and acceptable. What then was his fault? He trusted in himself that he was righteous and despised others; and thus he threw away at a single stroke all the blessings which God might else have had in

[1] St. Matt. xxiii. 23.

store for his abstinence, his purity, his justice, his attention to the religion of his Father; and by a little foolish self-love, and by a little ill-natured comparison of himself with his neighbour, made vain the endeavours of, perhaps, a long life, and, while he thought that he was standing firmly, made that very flattering thought the occasion of a dismal fall!

Is it necessary that I should go on to explain and vindicate the justice of such a sentence? Will not the common sense of those who hear me teach them, that for even the best of men to boast himself before his Maker, must be to that Maker most offensive, inasmuch as, however good he may be, it is God to whom he owes it all? The pharisee himself, indeed, acknowledged this. He was not so vain, he was not so silly as to be ignorant that of himself he was able to do nothing; and he therefore gives, in words at least, the glory to God, and thanks Him that he was not like other men, an extortioner, unjust, or adulterous. But in this very enumeration of God's favours to him, he shows that he allowed himself to take a pride in them; that, instead of endeavouring after a further progress, he was idly amusing himself with viewing the progress which he had already made; unconscious all the while how much ground his rivals in the race were gaining on him. How much more blameable then, how much more ridiculous (if any thing could be a matter of ridicule in which the souls of men are concerned), must their pretensions

be who reckon up their own good deeds, not as reasons for thankfulness to God, but as claims to reward or pardon from Him; who talk of the good which they have done, or the harm which they have not done, as if, by its own value, it gave them a title to Heaven, and to come into the presence of their Maker not like His servants but His creditors!

Let us examine this matter a little further! Whoever prides himself on his own good deeds in the sight of God, must suppose one or both of two things; either that those good deeds have of themselves some power to gratify or benefit God, so as that God *owes* him Heaven in repayment for the advantage which He has received from him, or that those actions for which he expects rewards were, at least, in his own choice to perform or to neglect, and such as if he had neglected them God could have had no reason for punishing him. But how different from the truth are both these suppositions! In the first instance, so highly exalted is God above all our actions and their consequences, that it is plain He needs none of our services; that the obedience of such worms as we are is as nothing in His sight, whom all the cherubim and seraphim serve in their bright and burning stations, who "hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hands," and to whose call the lightenings answer, "here we are [1]." It is only from His

[1] Isaiah xl. 12. Job xxxviii. 35.

love to us, for our own sakes, and in order to our happiness, that He has made us at all, or has laid any commands upon us. He bids us love each other, and do good to each other, because, by this means, we each of us shall make the other happy or relieve the other's distress. He bids us be sober, be honest, be chaste, be industrious, because it is by an observance of these rules alone that we can keep ourselves in health, in cheerfulness, in plenty, and worldly prosperity. He bids us pray to Him, and give Him thanks, and serve Him, because He thus opens to us a fresh source of strength for the discharge of our duties; of hope and comfort under our necessary calamities; of that spirituality of mind and acquaintance with Heavenly things, which is the purest pleasure a man can meet with here, and the necessary introduction to still purer and brighter happiness hereafter. But in Himself God needs us not! had we never been born, our songs would never be missed in the full chorus of angels; and, were we all now to perish, He could raise up from the dust beneath our feet a better and a worthier race of creatures than we are. Who then are we, and what are our good deeds, that we should venture to praise them in His presence?

But further, all these things in the performance of which we pride ourselves are, after all, no more than our duty. We are commanded to do them; we are threatened most severely if we neglect them. All the good deeds which we have done

are, therefore, in fact, nothing more than so many instances in which we have not done evil; and who shall say that our not deserving hell, supposing it to be true, would be, in itself an equitable claim on such a vast reward as Heaven: or that our best actions, being such as they are, would not be over-paid by the life and health and happiness of a single day, though we were immediately after to sink into dust and be forgotten? Who then can hope that such good actions as we can perform can reasonably be placed in the balance against our many evil deeds, or free us from the punishment which these last so loudly call for?

For this is another and a still more aweful reason for disclaiming all human merit, and placing our only hopes of pardon in the great mercy of God, by which also the publican in the parable sought and found it. It is not merely the worthlessness of our good deeds, but the number and greatness of our evil deeds, which should fill us with humility and fear in the presence of God; and lead us, instead of claiming reward, to acknowledge ourselves worthy of the severest punishment. We have all sinned, it is in vain to seek to hide it from ourselves, we have all sinned most grievously; if not in those particulars, which the pharisee of whom we have read mentioned, yet in many others which, if less thought of by mankind, are no less strictly forbidden by the Almighty; we are all God's debtors to an infinite amount; and being so, it is surely fitter far to cast ourselves on His mercy

altogether, than to set off our own pitiful balance of good deeds, or supposed good deeds, as a reason why judgement should not be passed on us.

But further, it may not be useless to remark the disguises under which pride and self-conceit will sometimes enter into our hearts; and the manner in which men are led to form high thoughts of themselves, while they suppose that they are giving the glory to God alone, and ascribing to Him alone all the work of their salvation. The pharisee was ready enough to confess that it was of God alone that he was less wicked than other men. And I have met with many serious persons who not only acknowledged this, but affected to lay an exceeding stress on the doctrine, who yet were strangely proud of their own supposed place in God's favour as His elect, His chosen, His brands plucked forth from the burning, and no less ready than the pharisee to make comparisons between themselves and other men, and bless God that they were more strict in their lives, more holy in their hearts, than such or such poor lost creature, who never attended church or meeting, or who was altogether uninformed or unconvinced of certain doctrines in which, whether truly or falsely, they placed the sum and substance of Christianity.

How offensive such conduct must be to God, a moment's consideration will convince us. "What hast thou to do with thy neighbour's guilt or innocence?" Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or fall-

eth[1]." "Yea he shall be holden up if he acknowledges his sin and endeavours to forsake it; when thou, with all thy greater advantages and greater proficiency, mayst mourn, perhaps too late, thy own presumption and want of charity."

There is a history told in one of the eastern writers which, for the moral which it affords, is here not unfit to be mentioned, of a certain youth who gave himself up to severe devotion, and passed whole nights in the study of the Scriptures and in prayer. "Behold," he said to his father, "how these have forgotten their God, while I alone am waking to His word and to His service!" "Alas, my son," was that wise father's reply, "it were better that thou hadst slept till the day of judgement than that thou shouldest thus wake to trust in thyself that thou art righteous, and to speak evil of thy brethren." He was a Mahometan who spake thus; but from him it were well if very many Christians would learn that, do all they may, it is not for them to institute comparisons with the weakest and most unhappy of God's creatures.

Yet a few words to the occasion for which we have many of us, I trust, during the last week, been making preparation. Do we come, like this pharisee, trusting in ourselves? Do we come, like this pharisee, inclined to condemn our neighbours? Or do we come in the deep sense of our own weakness, in the sorrowful recollection of our own misdeeds,

[1] Romans xiv. 4.

in the earnest desire to forsake our evil ways, and in the hope, a sure and certain hope, that on us who acknowledge ourselves sinners, the Lord will show abundant mercy? We have a more painful knowledge than even the publican described by our Lord could possess of the danger of sin, and its great offensiveness in the eyes of our Maker; inasmuch as we know, which he could not, that to obtain pardon for the sins of the world, it was necessary that God Himself should give us His beloved Son to be offered as a bloody sacrifice. We have a more certain and blessed hope than this penitent publican enjoyed; inasmuch as that atonement, which he only knew through figures and prophecies, we have known and felt as a historical and spiritual certainty; so that not only by the blood of bulls and of goats, but by the pure and sinless blood of the blessed Jesus, we look to have our sins done away, and our pardon sealed, and a more blessed strength to be hereafter given us to the forsaking of every evil way, and the purifying of our conscience towards God.

Let us only not be wanting to ourselves; let us only seek His grace through its appointed channels, and bending low before His altar, and receiving with deep humility the pledges of His peace, let us renounce all hope but in Him alone, and cry out each of us in our hearts to Him who is ready to hear and to save, God be merciful to me a sinner!

SERMON IX.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

[Preached at Delhi, Jan. 2, 1825.]

ST. LUKE x. 36, 37.

Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, he that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

THE discourses which Christ delivered to the people in the form of parables, may be classed under three descriptions. Some of them are short and simple stories intended for our example only, or to explain His doctrine. Such is the parable of the unjust judge, which has no hidden meaning, and is merely introduced to illustrate the force of continued prayer. In some again, such as those where He likens the kingdom of Heaven to a marriage supper, a vineyard let out to husbandmen, and a sower scattering seed, He describes in obscure language, and under the form of an allegory, His own dealings with mankind, and the future fortunes of the Christian Church. Thirdly, there are some which partake of both these kinds; they contain an inward and doctrinal meaning, which refers to the

faith of Christians, and a practical lesson, if they are taken according to the letter, which is a guide and example to their lives. In both these ways the parable of the good Samaritan affords us valuable instruction. If taken according to the letter, it is a beautiful example of charity; and if we go further into its meaning, and see, as I shall presently explain, the Son of God represented by this benevolent traveller, we then are taught to derive our love for mankind from the love which Christ has shown to us, and His example is enforced by our gratitude.

One of the teachers of the law of Moses, the same order of men who are elsewhere called scribes, had endeavoured to ensnare our Saviour by the solemn question, "what shall I do to inherit eternal life[1]?" How this question was to ensnare does not immediately appear; it might be to draw from Him something contrary to the law of Moses, or offensive to the prejudices of the people; it might be accompanied by an insulting tone or manner, as if to say, "what are these mighty discoveries which prophets and kings have desired in vain?" At all events, it was asked from motives of ill-will, and in the hope to injure Christ. Our Lord, in His answer, refers him to the passage in Deuteronomy which, from his office, he read publicly every Sabbath. "What is written in the law?" are His words, "How readest thou?" The lawyer replies,

[1] St. Luke x. 19.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. And He said unto him, thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live[1]."

But though the scribe had answered right, there were reasons why our Lord's reference to this passage of Scripture was very unpleasing to him. Not only was it so wise and so true, and so conformable to the law of Moses, that no accusation or slander could be built on it, and all his malice and insult was retorted on his own head; but his conscience could not but inform him that he was openly condemned by his own law. How could he boast of loving his neighbour, who was even then laying snares for the life of Christ; who with the deepest malice and subtlety was asking a solemn question in the hope of ruining his teacher. He felt, it may well be, that his words had judged himself; and to escape this application of them, (as the Scripture says, "to justify himself,") he caught at the captious distinctions of the Jewish doctors, and demanded, "who is my neighbour[2]?" Jesus, instead of answering as He might have done, "I, Jesus, whom thou persecutest," is contented with a milder method of instruction in the beautiful parable which follows, and which is too well known to need repetition.

The scenery and circumstances of the story

[1] St. Luke x. 26—28. [2] Ver. 29.

were familiar to all who heard them, and were such as might happen daily. The road between Jerusalem and Jericho is now, and always has been, dismal and dangerous. Is is through a deep and barren valley, without grass, or water, or inhabitants, except savage bands of robbers, whose cruelties were so frequent that the road was generally known by the name of the bloody way. Any Jew, therefore, who heard our Lord's discourse might have fallen, himself, into the peril which is here described, and the story, if we take it in its plainest sense, told them, more forcibly than ten thousand arguments, to do unto others as they would wish that others should act by them. But this was not the only, nor the main intention of the parable, which, as it applied to the lawyer, was to prove the claim which Christ had to his love and gratitude, and to show the total insufficiency of the law of Moses to rescue human nature from its miserable condition. The unfortunate plundered traveller is, then, a representative of all mankind. They, like him, have departed from Jerusalem, the city of God, His favour, or the light of His countenance; and set their face towards the pursuits and pleasures of this world, those temptations which are represented under the name of Jericho, a town which, as you will read in the book of Joshua, was accursed of God, and devoted to everlasting ruin[1]. And, like this traveller, by their

[1] Joshua vi. 17.

departure from Jerusalem, they have fallen into a valley of blood, into the power of the worst of thieves, and the most cruel of murderers, the devil and his angels. And now stripped of his raiment of righteousness, wounded to the very death, and his wounds festering in the face of Heaven, man is left in the naked misery of his nature, without hope, or help, or comfort. A certain priest comes down that way; by him are signified the sacrifices offered for sin in the earlier ages of the world, the offerings of Melchisedek, Noah, and Abraham. But to help this wretched object the blood of bulls and of goats was vain; it could not cleanse his conscience, nor heal the wounds inflicted by his spiritual enemies; the sacrifice passes by on the other side. A Levite next appears; the representative of the Jewish law given by Moses, himself of the tribe of Levi, and administered in all its ceremonies by the Levite family. Moses is, indeed, represented as aware of the extent of the evil, and the miserable condition of mankind; he approaches, he looks on the sufferer, but will not, or cannot help him; no ceremonies, no outward form of holiness are here of service; he passes by on the other side.

But "a certain Samaritan," (do you not remember how the Jews had said to Jesus, "thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil[1]?") "A certain Samaritan," saith our Lord, using their own lan-

[1] St. John viii. 48.

guage, and the insults which they had thrown out against Him, "as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him[1]." Do you not perceive, my Christian friends, do not your own hearts inform you how truly this parable represents our blessed Saviour? He, when no other help was found, when neither sacrifices nor ceremonies could have saved us from perishing miserably in our sins, He came to us; He bound up the wounds which the malice of the devil had inflicted; He expended His own provision, His own life and blood to heal them; and bore us safely and tenderly to the ark of His holy covenant, which is here represented as an inn, under whose shelter all the sojourners of this world were to be received, of every nation and caste, and however wide had formerly been their wanderings.

Nor does His care stop here; on the morrow when He departed, for how short alas! was the stay of God among men! though He is constrained to leave the sufferer, he commits him to kind and careful hands, with sufficient supplies for his present necessity, and a promise of ample payment at his second coming for all the good that should be done to the least of these his brethren. And so closely do even the smallest circumstances of the parable

[1] St. Luke x. 33, 34.

agree with this explanation, that the ancient doctors and fathers of the Church are of opinion that by the two pieces of silver, (which are in our version rendered pence, though their value was, in fact, much greater) by these two pieces of silver are represented the sacraments which are left for the support of Christians, till their good Samaritan shall return again, and which are committed to the care of the clergy who are represented here as hosts of Christ's inn, and dispensers of His spiritual provision and bounty. "Which now of these three," continues our Saviour, "was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?" Was it the priest with the sacrifices of blood? Was it Moses the Levite in whose law thou trustest? Or, lastly, was it I whom the Jews called a Samaritan? "He," the lawyer was compelled to answer, "he that showed mercy on him." Then said Jesus, "As I have loved you, even so do ye also love one another;—as far as the difference between us will admit, imitate my example—go and do thou likewise[1]."

The doctrine, then, contained in this parable may be stated in a few words; that mankind by the malice of the devil were robbed of God's grace, and brought into a state of misery, and into the shadow of death, from which neither sacrifices, nor ceremonies, nor any effort which man could make, nor any revelation which God thought proper to

[1] St. Luke x. 36, 37.

declare before the Messiah's coming, were able to recover them; and that (in the words of our Church service,) "there is no other name given to man through whom we may receive salvation, but only the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The practical lessons to be drawn from it are also of the most exceeding consequence to our salvation. First, from the example here given us by Christ, we may learn to "go and do likewise;" to consider all mankind as our neighbours and brethren; and to do them all the good in our power. And that this love and desire to do them service is not to be confined to those only whom we know, or with whom we are connected; for the traveller described in the parable, was a perfect stranger to the Samaritan, and no otherwise connected with him than as he wanted his help. But further, the Jews and Samaritans were bitter enemies, hating each other as unclean and unholy. Yet this good man flings from him, at once, we see, all former hate, all remembrance of ancient injuries, and recollects only that the miserable wretch who is bleeding before him is a man and a brother. And shall we presume to let our party feelings, our prejudices, or our own poor resentments interfere with the commands of God, or the duty which we owe to our brethren! When our fellow-creature is perishing for lack of our help, shall we plead that he is a stranger, that he is nothing to us, that he has used us ill formerly, and can expect nothing at our hands? "As we

have therefore opportunity," are the words of the apostle, "let us do good unto all men [1]!"

But, secondly, we must not show our love in common expressions of pity, or excuse ourselves from doing nothing on the pretence that little is in our power. Some men will tell us gravely, that they cannot give to every beggar that asks, and therefore they shut their hearts against all. But if this Samaritan, because he could not build a hospital, because he could not give up his time to watch on that dangerous road for the many other wretches who were stripped and wounded there; if on these pretences, for I cannot call them reasons, he had left this man to perish, whom it was in his power to save, what should we have said or thought of such cruel prudence? Be not deceived; impossibilities are not required of us, but as far as we can, we must be merciful; and that our means of doing good may reach the farther, we must learn from this kind traveller. He went himself on foot that he might assist the dying man with his horse; he with his own hands bound up his wounds, and laid out on him the oil and wine which he had prepared for his own journey. In like manner we should keep a watch over our little useless expences, and deny ourselves some unnecessary luxuries or comforts, that we may have to give to them that need. Blessed is he who is frugal, for he is able to be generous.

[1] Gal. vi. 10.

Thirdly, we may draw from this parable very useful instruction as to the duty both of the clergy and of those committed to their care. We see that the wounded traveller, who represents mankind, was not immediately restored to health and vigour, but was to remain under cure till the second coming of his deliverer. And during this time, the ministers of the Gospel, as hosts of Christ's inn, and distributors of His Sacraments, are to view themselves in no other light than as patient nurses of a sick and feeble world.

Happy are they among our number, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing; and woe, everlasting woe to those who neglect their duty! But you, my friends, you are also called upon to shew your gratitude to our good Samaritan, the Redeemer of our souls, by submitting to the advice and government of those in whose care He has left you. You must not murmur uncharitably at our imperfections, or seek unadvisedly after new doctrines, or new spiritual medicines. You must not leave the sound word of God to pamper your appetites with change; nor wander lightly from the shelter of the Church into the howling wilderness which surrounds it. It is your business and your duty, by a patient use of the regular means of grace, by devout hearing of the word of God, and diligent and faithful attendance on His Sacraments, to perfect the cure which Christ has begun in your hearts; and it is the business and duty of all, in whatever station they

may be placed, by praying for each other, helping each other and bearing each other's burdens to fulfill the law of Christ. This is His first and His last commandment, the beginning and the end of the Christian faith, that as He has loved us so should we love one another. To Him we can give no worthy honour; our praise, our service, our gratitude are without power to reward the Almighty; but all He asks and all He requires as a return for His help and mercy, is that we should "Go and do likewise!"

SERMON X.

LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD.

[Preached at Bombay, May 22, 1825.]

St. Matt. xx. 16.

So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen.

The parable which these words conclude, was spoken by our Lord in correction of a little natural vanity in which St. Peter had indulged, when contemplating the sacrifices which he and his brother apostles had made in the cause of the Messiah. A certain young man of ample property, and of dispositions favourable to religion, had been honoured by Christ, either as a test of his faith, or as a mark of approbation of his virtues, with a call to His ministry, and to the number of His chosen disciples. Dismayed, however, at the danger and self-denial by which such a life was menaced, encumbered by his affection for the world, and by the comforts and luxuries of his present condition, he shrunk back, though sadly and unwillingly, from

the offered boon, and "went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions[1]." On this our Lord took occasion to remark, as may be seen in the preceding chapter, on the fascinating nature of worldly wealth, and the absolute necessity of a more than common dispensation of celestial grace, to enable the rich man to break the chain of pleasure and of pride, to resist the many and peculiar temptations with which his path in life is strewn, and to resign, if it should become his duty, his rank, his fortune, and his ease, in the service of that God from whom he has received them.

While He was thus speaking, and thus, as it should seem, lamenting the dangerous wealth of the young man who had just gone away, it is easy to perceive what was passing in St. Peter's mind. "If the sacrifice of wealth would have been so precious in the eyes of God, then, surely, the self-devotion of the poor must, at least, be equally well pleasing to Him. I and my fellows had, indeed, somewhat less to resign, but what we had, we gave up for Christ; the comfort of a settled home, the security of peaceful labour, the endearments of our kindred, the implements of our toil, and all those numberless and nameless ties which bind the poor man, even more than the rich, to the scenes of his childish sports, the recollections of his earliest love, the limits of his humble ambition,—all these we resigned, and we resigned them cheerfully."

[1] St. Matt. xix. 22.

"Behold we have forsaken all and followed Thee! what shall we have therefore?"

The answer of our Lord is more than usually impressive and beautiful. While assuring His ardent and affectionate disciple of an ample and overflowing recompense, He replies to his thoughts as well as to his words, and cautions him against supposing that all who now seemed comparatively backward in the cause of the Gospel, should remain for ever idle and indifferent; or that none but those who were the first and immediate companions of the Messiah, should be admitted to their proportionate share in the toils and honours of His kingdom. "I say unto you," are His words, "that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first[1]."

As if He had said, "Doubt not, Peter, that thou and thy companions will receive from a bountiful God a rich return for all your labours in His cause; doubt not that whatever sacrifices are made, for my sake, of present ease, of present possession, of present and worldly affections, will be all no less duly

[1] St. Matt. xix. 28—30.

and mercifully appreciated by Him, who will not suffer even a cup of water given in His name to pass without its recompence. But deem not yourselves so secure of my love by the sacrifices which you *have* made as to relax in your future services. Judge not those who stand idle now, for the time of their labouring may come. Of you who have been my earliest followers there is one who shall betray his Lord; and another, even thou thyself, shalt basely and shamelessly deny me. And there is one whose name ye know not, and who is now my bitter enemy, one Saul of Tarsus, to whom I shall, hereafter, make myself known, who, having received my faith, shall labour more abundantly than you all, and come not a whit behind the chiefest of my earlier Apostles." "For the kingdom of Heaven," our Lord proceeds to say, "the kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man which is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard; and when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them, go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you; and they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, because no man hath hired us. He

saith unto them, go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the Lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, call the labourers and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, saying, these last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst not thou agree with me for a penny? take that thine is, and go thy way; I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? is thine eye evil because I am good? So the last shall be first and the first last, for many be called but few chosen."

Is there any here who can impugn the justice of such an expostulation? Is there any who does not perceive that, when the earliest labourers had received their stipulated hire, they had no colourable ground of murmuring against their employer for giving an equal sum to any other whom he chose to favour? Can we fail to recollect that of all these labourers the necessities were the same, though their opportunities of earning a supply had

not been equal; that the same kindness which called them in when so little remained to be done, might naturally be expected to prompt a liberal employer to proportion his bounty to their wants rather than to their merits; and that he who might unblamed have relieved those wants without exacting any labour at all, was equally justified in exacting no more labour than the approach of night enabled them to apply effectually?

Though, therefore, (as we have seen from the circumstances under which the parable was spoken) its primary application was plainly to the hope and reward of the Christian ministry, and its intention was to rebuke the self-exaltation of Peter, and to prepare both himself and his fellow apostles for the reception of future teachers of the Gospel and future participants in glory; though this was, I say, its primary meaning, yet its principle is obviously capable of a far wider and more important application, as illustrative of the general dealings of the Almighty with mankind, and of the manner, more particularly, in which, under the Gospel, mankind in general are admitted to mercy and salvation.

I do not mean, as some have mistakenly supposed, I do not mean, that this parable can be fairly said to convey the doctrine (which is not very consonant with reason, and which is directly opposed to many positive assertions of Scripture) that the condition of the blessed in another world is to be alike to all; and that, whatever their ex-

ertions in the cause of God, they are not to differ from each other in glory. Such a supposition is opposed to the express declaration of our Lord that in His "Father's house are many mansions;" it is opposed in a no less striking manner to the memorable parable of the talents[1]; it is opposed by all which we are told in Scripture of that celestial hierarchy of angels, whose fellow citizens we ourselves hope to become; it is opposed by the specific promise which our Lord had just made to His twelve that *they* should sit on twelve thrones, in sovereignty as well as in dignity, exalted over the tribes of believing Israelites.

But, in truth, those enquirers may do worse than lose their labour, who seek in the illustrations and parables of Scripture a detailed as well as a general likeness of the objects which they are intended to explain, and are discontented with the portrait if they miss the minutest feature of the original. For no purpose of instruction can such an accuracy of circumstances be required; on no principle of poetry or eloquence is such servility of adaptation desirable. When a lion is held up to the imitation of a warrior fighting for his native land, shall this be gravely received as a recommendation to contend, like the lion, with the weapons only which nature has furnished? When the sluggard is sent to the anthill for instruction, did the wise king of Israel intend him to scoop his dwelling in the ground?

[1] St. John xiv. 2. St. Matt. xxv. 14—30.

What would become of Esop and Bidpai, if their apologues were expounded by the same minuteness of allegory? Or what renders it necessary to suppose in the present instance, that the rewards of Heaven will, necessarily, be all on an equality, while we refuse at the same time, which we must refuse, to suppose that envy, murmuring, and an evil eye will be found among the spirits of just men made perfect?

All, therefore, which the spirit of the parable necessarily implies, and all which it can be supposed to imply, (when coupled with the circumstances under which it was spoken, and compared with other passages of Scripture) is an assertion of the absolute sovereignty of God over His works, and the absolute freedom of His bounties to them; a declaration that the rewards of another state of existence are not a matter of debt, but of grace and mercy, and that, in the distribution of these rewards the Almighty will be guided by a reference to the necessities of mankind as much as to their virtues; and more particularly that those virtues so far as, for Christ's sake and in His name, they can be taken account of at all, will be sometimes estimated by proportions entirely distinct from the length of our Christian course, and the amount of opportunities afforded to us.

I will endeavour to explain myself, and in so doing to vindicate, by His help, the mercy and justice of the Most High. It is, in the first place, certain from the whole tenour of the Gospel, and if

direct testimonies were wanting, it might be inferred from the present parable, that no man can either enter into a state of grace, or work out the salvation once begun by God's Spirit, in his heart, except by the preventing and supporting grace of that blessed Spirit alone. It is God's gift that he is called. It is God's vineyard in which he is privileged to labour; and the power and opportunities of doing good are, like tools for the day, supplied to him by God alone.

In thus maintaining God's absolute sovereignty, I am not maintaining the doctrine of absolute decrees. I cannot conceive that God ever uses His sovereignty in that manner; though grace is free, it will not follow that it is employed irresistibly; and, for all which appears to the contrary in the present parable, the labourers who were sent into the vineyard might, as well as the guests who were invited to the marriage supper, have refused to go, and have preferred their previous idleness, or the service of a different master. But with such as accept the call, with such as persevere in their labours, with such as, on account of these labours, have reason to expect everlasting life from their Heavenly Father, with all such the calling has been of God; and for that calling, and all its blessed consequences, they owe to God unbounded thankfulness, and have reason to ascribe to His goodness alone even the covenanted rewards which they receive from Him. But it is obvious that His goodness to them, being thus free, cannot be lessened

by the fact that He shows to certain of their brethren a greater goodness still; they are, themselves, paid beyond their deserts; and it is envy alone, of all evil passions the worst and basest, which can find pain in the happiness of another. Yet even in this dispensation of our God, as represented to us in the present parable, is nothing capricious or unintelligible, inasmuch as other considerations innumerable, besides the duration, or even outward success of our Christian course, must have their weight with the Alljust and Allwise.

One believer, for instance, is placed by His providence in a distinguished and, outwardly, an arduous station of duty. He bears the burthen and the heat of the day; he rides in the foremost ranks of the armies of His invincible Lord; he carries the banner of the cross where it is assailed by the potentates of earth, and the princes of the power of the air; and he fights, through a long life, the good fight of faith successfully, being encouraged and supported, in part it may be, by the very conspicuousness of the sphere in which he moves, and still more and more, undoubtedly, by that secret influence of the Most High, which hath girded his loins with strength, and covered his head in the day of battle.

The pilgrimage of another is of an obscurer kind; his walk is through the secret paths of life, unknown, unpraised, perhaps reproved and slighted. He has no converts to show; he has had no splendid opportunities of evincing his love of God and

his dauntless faith in his Redeemer. His warfare has been within; and in weakness and fear, in solitude and silence, he has struggled with the defects of an imperfect education, with the discouragement of unsuccessful labours, with the infirmities of a peevish and distrustful temper, with the unkindness or neglect of men, and with the indescribable terrours of those powers of darkness which are most potent with the weak and melancholy. Yet, though he has trembled, he has not yielded; yet, though he has done little, he has endeavoured all he could; yet, though he has been encompassed with darkness and dismay, from the deeps he hath called upon God; and his eye, from the midst of the valley of the shadow of death, has been bent on the heavenly Sion! And of these two candidates, these martyrs of different descriptions, which best may claim the palm? I know not; who but God can know! But the men are both gone to their reward; and I am convinced that the more illustrious and distinguished servant of Christ would be neither surprised nor grieved to find his weaker brother set beside him!

It is the same with every exercise of the graces and virtues of Christianity. A man is judged, and if judged then surely recompensed, according to that which he hath, not according to that which he hath not. This man, we will suppose, has an ample fortune, and uses that fortune nobly. He supports missions, he founds hospitals, he relieves the bodily and spiritual wants of hundreds. This

other is himself but little, if at all, elevated above the condition of an object of charity; yet he steals from his own repose to watch by the sick-bed of a neighbour; he defrauds his own scanty meal to share it with those who are yet more necessitous. The one is a mighty river, which bears wealth and fertility to many provinces; the other is a little mountain spring, whose rills are but sufficient to nourish a drooping flower, or to offer a cup of cold water to a fainting traveller. But is the widow's mite forgotten? or who shall doubt that, under circumstances of which God alone is the fitting judge, it may be, when the river and the spring have alike rolled their waters to the ocean of eternity, that the one may, in proportion to its course and its quantity, have been as valuable as the other!

The same observation will apply to a longer and a shorter life, or, to approach more closely to the particular circumstances of the parable, to the strongest case of all, of an earlier or later conversion to the faith and practice of Christianity. It is a great and blessed thing when a man has, from his youth up, been faithful; neither transgressed in any considerable respect, the will of his Heavenly Father. For such a one a crown of glory is laid up; for such a one the promise abideth sure that he shall dwell in the presence of God for ever! How many dangers does he not escape who, from the beginning of his course, has never widely wandered! How many fears, how many bitter sorrows,

how many struggles against habits of lengthened evil, how many agonies unspeakable of repentance, of shame, of doubt, of terrour and despair, has he escaped, which must be assuredly undergone by him who at the third, the sixth, or, still more, at the eleventh hour, is awakened to a sense of his condition. Yet even of this last, whose day is drawing to a close, the case, though most perilous, is not altogether desperate. His heart may yet be touched; he may yet seek the face of the Lord sincerely, humbly, penitently; and that gracious Lord, before whose angels there is joy on the conversion of a single sinner, that Lord who bare with Him from the cross the spirit of the penitent thief to Paradise, will not disdain even the offering of a single and a last hour, nor shut the gates of Heaven against repentance under any circumstances. But can he regain his lost ground in the race? Can he, beginning late, yet equal his earlier competitors? that must depend on ten thousand different circumstances; but it must, under all circumstances to a certain degree, depend on himself. His task will be the harder, too hard I own for a dying man; and for an old man, unassisted by an extraordinary measure of Divine grace, beyond the reach of possibility; yet much may, in the strength of the Most High, be done; and if he sanctifies his few remaining years to the service of God, with a livelier faith in proportion as his end is nearer, a deeper sorrow in proportion as his sense of guilt is keener, a holier fear in proportion as his danger is great, and an

unbounded love in proportion as the mercy shown to him is unbounded, it may be that some of those who have in past life accounted him reprobate, may to their surprise, but in Heaven surely not to their envy, hear the sentence, "I will give unto this last even as unto thee!"

The sum of all is this, that the most experienced Christian has great need to fly from confidence; and the most dispirited penitent no reason for indulging in despair. The first, even in his most prosperous course, will do well to take heed, lest those, whom he has left far behind, should, through his carelessness, be gaining ground on him; and he should learn to think more comfortably and hopefully of many whose present condition appears most estranged from God, inasmuch as we know not but an acceptable time may yet be found, in which they may be called of God, and hear His voice, and gladly and successfully become His labourers. The second may be emboldened to a more excellent zeal and a warmer piety, to improve to the best advantage whatever time remains to them, by the assurance that for those who labour well even a single hour, a reward may be in store, at which even their associates in glory may be astonished. But let all men beware how they suffer precedents of this sort to withdraw them from a timely care of their salvation, as knowing that whenever they are last called is the eleventh hour to them, that the later our repentance is deferred, it must needs be the more arduous and sorrowful;

that neither youth nor middle age are exempt from the accidents of mortality; that though life should be granted, it does not follow that grace will return; and that he who commits his soul to the chance of an evening which may never arrive, and a warning which may never be granted to him, may learn too late the consequence of his unspeakable folly, when the vintage is ended and the night is come, and the steward of the vineyard shall descend in His Father's name to recompense their deserts alike to the profitable and unprofitable servant!

SERMON XI[1].

THE CONVERSION OF THE HEATHEN.

[Preached at Bombay, on Whitsunday, May 22; at Colombo, September 18; and at Calcutta, on Advent Sunday, November 27, 1825; in aid of the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.]

ACTS ii. 38, 39.

The promise is unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

On the nature and certainty of that illustrious event which we are assembled this day to commemorate; on the personality and divinity of that mighty Spirit whose advent has been now re-

[1] This Sermon is published agreeably to a promise made by his Lordship to the several Archidiaconal Committees formed upon its delivery. It is printed exactly as it was originally preached at Bombay. The body of the Discourse was substantially the same when delivered at Colombo and Calcutta, the introduction only, which relates to the day of Pentecost, being altered as the several occasions required. It was the intention of the Bishop to deliver it again at Madras on his return from his visitation of the Peninsula. It is unnecessary to relate the sad event by which this intention was frustrated.—*Calcutta Editor.*

corded; of the manner in which His testimony confirmed the truth of our Saviour's mission from the Father; and on the blessed support, consolation, and protection, which the universal Church, and each individual member of it have since continued to receive from Him; on these natural and usual topics of discussion on the day of Pentecost, on which it is reasonable to suppose the majority of Christians informed, and on which I have abundant reason to believe my present audience well instructed, it is not now my intention to address you. There is another consideration, less obvious, or less frequently insisted on, but which arises no less naturally from the circumstances under which the Holy Ghost was given; and which, in connection with those circumstances, I shall endeavour to impress on your conviction; I mean the diffusive and universal character of the revelation of God's will through His Son; the interest which every nation under Heaven possesses in the Christian covenant; and the obligation which rests upon every believer to assist and forward, in his station and according to his ability, the extension of that knowledge whereby he is himself made wise unto salvation, the communication of those spiritual riches which he has himself received so freely.

That the message of mercy brought by Christ to mankind was the common heritage of all who partake in our human nature; that to the Shiloh who should come, the gathering of the nations was to be; and that, in the promised descendant of Abra-

ham's loins all the tribes of the earth were to be called blessed, are truths so broadly stated in Scripture, and so universally received by those who defer to scriptural authority, that it seems needless, at this time of day, and among those who are not professed unbelievers, to prove that the religion of His Son was designed by God as the religion of all mankind; that it was the will of the Most High that His knowledge should cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; and that the false systems and false divinities of former ages should be consigned, by the disclosure of a holier and sublimer creed, to the custody of oblivion, of neglect and scorn; to the moles of their consecrated grottos, and the bats of their dark and deserted temples.

In conformity with these principles, and with innumerable passages in the ancient prophetic writings, in which these principles are developed and confirmed, we find our Lord, while on earth, announcing to his Jewish disciples His anticipation of other sheep of a different and distant fold; we find the same Lord, when already risen from the dead, sending forth His disciples, so soon as they should have received power from on high, to preach the Gospel to every creature; we find the promised Comforter, in the miraculous glory which He shed forth, and the miraculous gifts which He communicated, assuming a form and confirming a faculty, of which the one was without meaning, and the other without utility, except as symbols and instruments of diffusive light and knowledge; and

we find, lastly, in the counsel given by St. Peter to his alarmed and conscience-smitten countrymen, that the promise, consequent on baptism, of remission of sins, and the gifts and comforts of God's Spirit, was not only to them and to their children, but to as many as God should call from the furthest regions of the earth, and the nations previously most estranged from the knowledge and worship of Jehovah.

It may be thought, indeed, that on this avowed intention, and these repeated injunctions of the Most High, the duty of endeavouring the conversion of the heathen might rest with sufficient security even abstracted from every other consideration of charity to the heathen themselves, and the desire, which is natural to every well constituted mind, of imparting to others those blessings which we ourselves most value.

That man would be no dutiful servant, that man would be any thing but an affectionate son, who, even without a positive command, and with no more than a bare intimation of the wishes of his father or his lord, should hesitate to employ the best exertions in his power to fulfil his blameless desires, and perform his righteous pleasure; and still less are the express injunctions of a parent or a superior to be slighted, because we ourselves do not at once perceive the expediency of an order, or apprehend, without having made the trial, its entire success impossible. When David expressed, though it were but a transient wish, to drink of the

fountain which welled up beside the gate of Bethlehem, his valiant men rushed forward, at once, sword in hand, to forestall his commands, and brought back from the thickest of the enemy, in their helmets, that blood-bought water which their sovereign had barely longed after. And the history of every age is full of illustrious examples of obedience and loyalty, in which the severest labours have been undergone, and the most appalling dangers encountered, in execution of commands, the motives of which have been but imperfectly known, or the policy of which has been even more than doubted. Let but the professed followers of God and His Son entertain the same desire to please their Lord which was displayed by Abishai and his comrades; let but the professed believers in Christ exhibit the same trust in His wisdom and deference to His authority, which is claimed by every public man from his soldiers and subordinate functionaries, and we may be assured that the attempt to communicate a knowledge of the truth to the Gentiles will be no longer neglected or opposed as an unauthorised or chimerical labour.

If, indeed, that be true, which no professing Christian will gainsay; if the religion of Christ be acknowledged as that form of doctrine which most of all represents God as He is, and in that sublime and amiable character which the aweful Judge, the mighty King, the most merciful Father of all, maintains with His subjects and His offspring; if it

teaches men to reject all erroneous and degrading notions of God, and to serve Him in the manner most worthy of and most acceptable to Him; it is really hard to say, by what process of self-deception a man can be led to suppose that he himself loves and honours the Almighty, who yet is indifferent or averse to the vindication of His name and attributes among his fellow-creatures. Of this feeling we are all abundantly sensible where our own honour, or the honour of any person whom we really value is implicated. And I appeal to all who hear me, whether, if even a tenth part of those absurdities and abominations were asserted of an earthly friend, an earthly parent, an earthly sovereign or benefactor, which the heathen around us, in their ignorance and superstition, assert and believe of God Most High, our best and most persevering endeavours would not be employed to do justice to the misrepresented friend, and undeceive the blinded calumniator.

Nor is this obligation weakened by the objection which is frequently brought forward, (sometimes against the truth of the Christian doctrine itself, and sometimes against the necessity of proclaiming that doctrine to the Gentiles), that if God were really displeased with the varieties of religious faith which exist among mankind, or if He were really so desirous as we suppose Him to be, for the universal adoption of any one religious system, He has means in His hand for at once accomplishing

His purpose, without waiting for the tardy feet of those human agents, whose office it is to bear the good tidings of salvation.

Of this objection, as employed against the truth of Christianity itself, I know not that, in the present place, I am bound to take any notice. It is not my present business to discuss the evidences of our faith; and, while addressing a congregation of Christians, I am justified in reasoning on Christian principles only, and taking for granted the data on which all Christians are agreed, that our religion is true, and that it is the best and most perfect which the Almighty has ever made known to His creatures. But as the notion to which I have alluded is at the bottom of very much of the avowed or lurking infidelity which we meet with, I may be excused for observing, that the objection against the Divine origin of the Gospel, which is taken from the pretended narrow limits within which the Gospel has been yet received, is alike unfortunate both in the facts which it assumes and in the arguments which it founds on them.

The adducers have, in the first place, misrepresented or misconceived the general purport of our Saviour's prophecies, in which, though the final triumph of His cause is often foretold, its immediate reception or rapid progress among men is never so much as intimated. The direct contrary is, indeed, implied in all comparisons of His Church and its privileges, to treasure hid in the ground which escapes the search of careless or superficial en-

quirers; to leaven buried in a bushel of meal, whose secret and pervading influence should make itself felt at length, and by degrees, through the whole of the mass which concealed it; of corn sown in a field, over which many moons must wax and wane ere first its green and tender shoots, its golden ears next, and lastly, its overflowing and manifold harvest, alleviate the anxiety and reward the labours of the husbandman. The contrary is, lastly, implied in the many predictions of our Lord while on earth, which prepare His disciples to encounter opposition, persecution, and contempt from the world in which they were to labour; and that many generations of offence, of dissension, of opposition, yea, and of apostacy, were to intervene before the Tabernacle of God was to be finally erected among His people, and the knowledge of the Lord should cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Nor can it be accounted reasonable to object to the claims of a prophet to Divine inspiration, that the sect which He founded has not met with a more favourable fortune upon earth than He Himself, in the first instance, promised and foretold.

Nor is this the only fact connected with Christianity which has been ignorantly or wilfully misrepresented. Its actual progress among men, and the number of its external professors have been almost systematically depreciated and diminished, while, by an opposite mistake, the probable amount of the Mussulman and Gentile inhabitants of our

planet have been exaggerated in a five-fold proportion. But, if assuming the latest and most accurate estimate which I have met with, (and that from no friendly hand) of the comparative population of the different sects among mankind, we estimate the amount of those who at present are called by the name of Christ at 200,000,000, or a fourth part of mankind; if we recollect that, within these limits are included all the most improved and improving portion of the world, the most powerful in arms, the most skilful in arts, the most distinguished in every branch of moral and natural philosophy, the most industrious, the wealthiest and the wisest among the sons of men; if we bear in mind that to them the entire old world is immediately or indirectly tributary; and that, in the new world, to which their genius has led the way, they have found an almost vacant, and a little less than boundless field for the occupation and dominion of an innumerable and believing posterity; if we consider that, however slow the progress of Christianity may have been, it is now and has been always progressive; it may seem that the enemies of our creed have been somewhat rash in their exultations over its failure. It may require no mighty measure of faith to believe that "the Lord is not slack as men count slackness;" that the word which hath gone forth from His mouth shall in no wise return unto Him empty; and that He who hath thus far conquered will go on to fresh conquests still; till the kingdoms of this world shall become

the kingdom of God and His Christ; till His Church, afflicted first and militant still, shall become universal, and at length triumphant; and till the material world itself shall make way for a nobler and happier creation, and a great voice shall be heard of much people in Heaven, saying, "Alleluja, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

Those objectors, indeed, who would revile the Christian faith, because in the course of 1800 years it has not yet converted the world, have forgotten the analogy between the moral and material universe, and how universally, in the latter, those changes which are beneficial, are, in comparison, slow and gradual. The desolation of a province by an earthquake or a volcano, may be the work of a single hour; but months, and years, and ages have been necessary, ere the gradual deposition of alluvial soil has clothed the rocky valley of the Nile with the harvests and fertility of Egypt, or produced Bengal from its parent Ganges. And those who infer that God does not will the eventual triumph of His name, and the eventual and complete felicity of His creatures, because His providence works by the agency of secondary causes, and through the imperfection of human labourers, may as well reason from the existence of vice that God does not delight in virtue, and are blasphemers against the religion of nature, as well as against that of revelation and prophecy.

The honour, then, of God, and His will as declared in Scripture, are of themselves sufficient

reasons to engage the zeal, the affections, the faith, and energies of Christians in the endeavour to disseminate His truth among those who still sit in darkness. Now, if much remains to be done ere the victory of the cross shall attain its full completion, if many nations still dishonour, by superstition, the glory of Him who made us all, and if the mightiest, and wisest, and best of beings is still unknown or misrepresented among the greater proportion of those who bear His image, the result on our minds should be no other than a greater ardour of exertion, in proportion as its necessity is greater, a more exalted zeal for His name, in proportion as that name is ignorantly dishonoured.

But it is not our duty to our Maker and Redeemer alone which should urge us to the dissemination of His Gospel; our love of man no less constraineth us to communicate to our neighbours and brethren the same inestimable blessings, which we have ourselves freely received from the Giver of all good things. It was not for the glory of God alone that the Son of God descended from on high, but in order that peace and good will to man might be manifested in that illustrious condescension. And it must be, to say the least of it, either a very inadequate notion of the nature and extent of the benefits conferred on mankind by a knowledge of and belief in Christianity, or a very lamentable coldness and indifference to the happiness or misery of our fellow creatures, which can make us backward, much more averse, to lend our aid, to

our power and in our proper station, to the progress of the true religion among the heathen.

For, let us recollect, that it is not wisdom alone, it is not the more perfect knowledge of God and His nature and attributes, it is not a mere freedom from idle or injurious superstitions, it is not a pure and holy law of life and morals only; nor yet the many and various advantages of a civil and political character, the improvement of the human intellect, the extension of secular knowledge, the acquisition of fresh fields of enterprise and mental enjoyment, and the perfection of those many arts and sciences which an enlargement of the understanding brings with it; it is not the advancement of social life, the more enlarged and accurate notions of truth and justice, the corroboration of every civil and every domestic tie, the restoration of the other sex to their natural place in society, and the many blessed effects which flow to our own sex, from that restored society and influence; not the wisdom, the wealth, the peace, the civil liberty, which, wherever Christianity has appeared, have uniformly followed in her train, and which every nation has enjoyed more purely and perfectly in proportion as the system of Christianity which it has received has been purer and more perfect; these are not the only, nor the greatest blessings which our backwardness or indifference would deny to our uninstructed fellow creatures. These, or any one of them, would be an object worthy of the utmost exertions and ardent desires of a benevolent mind;

and to accomplish which, in any considerable degree, the labour of a man's whole life would be a cheap and easy sacrifice. Who is there among us who would not rejoice, by all safe and peaceable means, to introduce a greater reverence for truth, a greater purity of language, a better founded and more consistent veneration for the obligations of justice and integrity among those with whom we dwell, to whom is entrusted the daily care of our persons, our property, and our children, and through whose agency and evidence alone, those among us who bear rule must provide for the public peace and security? Who is there who calls to mind the wretched follies by which men, naturally as acute and intelligent as ourselves, attempt to escape from the burden of sin, and to appease the anger of offended Heaven, without desiring to substitute repentance and a faith in that great Victim who died for the sins of the world, in place of the vain washings, the unprofitable self-mortifications, the abominable obscenity, the hideous cruelty, the ashes, the torturing irons, and the torturing flame, which engross the time, and delude the understanding, and destroy the happiness of the Indian aspirant after holiness? Who, lastly, that has either witnessed or heard but a small part of the wonderful and horrible things which, in the name of religion, are perpetrated and daily perpetrating around us, but must desire, (by the same mild and persuasive arguments which only suit our cause) to quench those funeral flames to which love,

strong as death, is now consigned by interested priestcraft; to abate those murders which pollute the stream of Ganges, and add a darker horror to the hideous features of Juggernâth; and to still those innocent cries and dry up that infant blood, which day and night mount up from Central and Western India, as a witness against us, to the God and Parent of all men?

But more is yet behind! These are not the only nor the most awful considerations which impel us to labour in the dissemination of the Christian faith. The souls of men are implicated! It is not, indeed, necessary for my argument, and it is far, very far, from my inclination, to determine rashly of the final state of those that are without, and who must stand or fall to that great Master only, whose throne is established in righteousness and judgement. But whatever mercy may be shown to those that offend in ignorance; whatever benefits may emanate (through the uncovenanted bounties of our God) from the death of Christ, towards those on whom the light of the Gospel has not shined; yet, doubtless, (if we would not resolve the privileges of the Gospel into a nullity,) a faith in Christ must be the entrance to a more certain and excellent salvation; the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which the regenerate obtain, must not only enable them to a more genuine holiness, but conduct them to a brighter glory; and, in whatever sense the Living God is the Saviour of all men, the same text, on which we ground this hope, assures

us, that, in a more pre-eminent and particular sense, He is the Saviour of them which believe. Nor is this all; for if murder, if uncleanness, if fraud, if falsehood, be breaches of that law which is written in the heart of every man, and that natural light whereby even the heathen are left inexcusable; yea, if idolatry itself be a practice, (as we find it described both in the prophetic and the apostolic writings), no less offensive in itself to God, no less subversive of the morals of men, and no less a criminal breach of the law of nature, than it is inconsistent with the dictates of natural reason, and with those notions of the Almighty which even the visible creation inculcates; it is impossible to contemplate the spiritual state, and spiritual prospects of very many of those by whom we are surrounded, without a painful apprehension of the issue of such errors, and a very earnest wish and prayer that the knowledge and sanctifying grace of the Gospel may be in time communicated to them.

Nor can it be maintained with reason that feelings like these, and the exertions consequent on such feelings, are exclusively incumbent on a peculiar order of men, on the ministers or missionaries of Christianity. On us, no doubt, there is an additional and aweful obligation; a woe is laid on us if we preach not the Gospel; and He who hath sent us forth into the world to proclaim His truth to every creature, requireth of us, beyond a doubt, our utmost endeavours,—where means of

personal exertion are afforded—and our utmost liberality, where we have to aid the personal exertions of our brethren. But to all, and not to the clergy only, the honour of God should be dear. On all, and not on a small minority of God's servants, the obligation is imposed of desiring the happiness and promoting the salvation of their brethren. And it is as much the duty of every Christian, in his proper sphere, and according to the means which he possesses, to lend his help in turning the sinner from the errour of his ways, and delivering the blinded Gentile from the accumulated danger of his condition, as it would be to pluck his brother out of the fire, or to prevent him, by timely warning, from walking down a precipice.

"Still," it has been said, "for such feelings and exertions there is ample scope at home. There are thousands in our native land who, no less than the heathen, need instructing and reclaiming, and on whom it were wiser and better to expend our missionary energies, than to intrude them on a race with whom we have no concern, and who may resent the intrusion in a manner dangerous to the dearest political interests of our nation."

For the first of these objections there might perhaps be more plausibility, if the promoters of missionary exertions abroad were indifferent to the condition of their erring countrymen, or if they did not also labour, at least as diligently as their opponents, in the support of schools, in the distribution of the Scriptures, and in every other channel of

benevolent exertion and expenditure, which can reclaim the wretched from the errour of his ways, and instruct the ignorant in his duty. But to maintain that the danger of those who are already in possession of the means of grace, is to occupy our mind so entirely that we can spare no pity to those who have no means of grace at all, that the progress of God's kingdom is to be suspended so long as there remains, in those countries over which it has a general empire, a perverse and unbelieving remnant, is to maintain that which, if it had been held by the apostles, would have excluded us, who are now assembled, for ever from the knowledge and blessings of which we are partakers; inasmuch as while a single Jew remained unconverted, it would have been an offence, on this principle, to offer the kingdom of God to any single Gentile. And who does not see, that the existence of misery and vice, and ignorance in our own land, is no argument whatever against endeavouring, in other lands, to diminish the amount of vice and ignorance, and misery, and that we are bound by every tie of reason, and compassion, and piety, to render honour to God's name wherever we may ourselves be thrown, and, as far as we have means and opportunity, to do good to all men without distinction.

But can it really be maintained, with any semblance of truth, or reason, or humanity, that the nations of this country, our neighbours, our domestics, our fellow-subjects, our fellow soldiers, who toil for us; who shed their blood in our defence;

whose wealth contributes so largely to the prosperity of Britain, and their valour (their faithful and invincible valour and allegiance,) so essentially promotes our security and renown; that these men, with whom we live and converse, distinguished by so many estimable and amiable qualities of intelligence, of bravery, of courteous and gentle demeanour, are devoid of a claim on all the good which we can render or obtain for them, on our affections, our bounties, our services, and, I will add, our prayers? Can we petition their Father and our's that His glorious kingdom may come, without desiring, if we think of them at all, that they may be partakers in it with us? or can we forget that such prayers and desires are no other than a mockery of God, unless our actions follow our lips, and we endeavour, in God's strength and help, to forward that triumph of His mercy for which we profess ourselves solicitous.

To the plea of political danger I must not be supposed insensible. We have no right, as Christians, to attempt a good work in a manner which is likely to be attended with an immediate and preponderant evil; we are bound, as Christian subjects and citizens, so to temper our zeal with discretion, as not to disturb the peace of the land wherein we dwell, and the government from whom we receive protection. And even setting aside all secular considerations and secular duties, we shall err most grossly against that pure and peaceable wisdom, whereby only we can attain the conversion of the heathen,

if we assail their errours with any other weapon than mild and courteous and unobtrusive argument, or do any thing which can array their angry passions against those opinions which we seek to recommend to their acceptance.

But in the system which only has been tried by the members of our communion, and which only, so far as my advice or authority can reach, shall ever, by God's blessing, be attempted in India; a system studiously distinguished from and unconnected with government, yet studiously kept within those limits of prudence and moderation which a wise and liberal government has prescribed; a system which, while it offers our faith to the acceptance of the heathen on the ground of its spiritual blessings, disqualifies no man, on account of his contrary opinions, from any civil or political advantage; a system which, by the communication of general instruction and general morality, imparts a knowledge and feeling which, whether they become Christians or no, must be highly valuable to them; a system which puts them in fair possession of the evidences of our creed, leaving it to themselves and their own unbiassed choice to determine between light and darkness; in such a system, so long as it is steadily adhered to, and patiently and wisely pursued, there is not, there cannot be danger.

They are their own learned men who are our teachers, our correctors of the press, our fellow-labourers in the work of instruction; they are their

own countrymen, yea, and they themselves who are benefited by the large expenditure which our system occasions amongst them; and even our missionaries, as associating with them more, and speaking their language better, and occupying themselves with their concerns and the promotion of their real or apprehended interests, are, (I have reason to believe, by what I have myself seen and heard in no inconsiderable part of India,) among the most popular Europeans who are to be found in their respective neighbourhoods. Yea more, I have had the happiness of witnessing, both in the number of converts which have already been made in Hindustan, in the general good conduct of those converts, and in the good terms on which they in general appear to live with their Gentile neighbours, both how much good may be done, and how little offence will be occasioned by a course of well-meant and well-directed efforts to enlighten the inhabitants of India.

Of all the various bodies of professing Christians, who, with more or less of light, and with greater or lesser zeal and providence, have been our precursors, or are about to be our emulators in this great and illustrious enterprise, it becomes me to speak with respect, and if I know my own heart, I shall never think of them with hostility. Every sect will naturally seek to diffuse those religious notions which they themselves esteem most agreeable to reason and religion; and any mode of Christianity, even the modes least distinguished by its peculiar

and most blessed characteristics, must be in itself, so far as it extends, a happy change from idolatry. But, while we rejoice that Christ is preached, even by those who hold not His faith in our own unity of fellowship; while we are content that the morality of the Gospel should be disseminated, even by those who rob Christ of His Godhead and mediatorial attributes; it is surely our duty to be no less anxious than they for the support and preaching of those forms which are associated with every recollection of early and ancestral reverence, those doctrines which we feel and know to be our surest sanction of morality in this world, and our only ground of hope in worlds beyond the grave. Every man, and every sect, must act for themselves, and according to the lights which they have received; but let no man teach a doctrine which he does not believe, because it is likely to be popular, or suppress a truth which he holds most sacred, because he fears that it will not be well received by those whom he seeks to benefit. God, we may be sure, has revealed nothing to men which it is not highly desirable for men to know; and the man who encourages the circulation of an imperfect creed, in the hope that its adoption may lead the enemy to that which he himself professes, is at once dealing untruly with himself, his neighbour, and the Most High; with himself as seeking after God's glory by means which God has not sanctioned; with his heathen neighbour, as offering him a religion of which he holds back the most essential portion;

and with his God, as concealing the honour which God has given to His Son, and being ashamed, (for what else is it but shame or cowardice which withholds a truth through fear of offending?) being ashamed before men of the divinity and cross of his Saviour. In what I have said, I seek to dissuade no man from propagating the truth which he proposes, but I desire to impress on those who profess the same truth with myself, that on the support and munificence of the members of the Church of England, the institutions of that Church have a paramount claim, beyond those of any other sect or society.

Of that Society, and that particular Institution for which I am now anxious to interest your bounty, it may be said in few words, that the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, has, since its establishment in the year 1701, been sedulously and successfully labouring, with the approbation and under the guidance of the venerable fathers of our Church, and of some of our most distinguished statesmen and philosophers, in supporting a line of missionary stations, (above 100 in number), in some of the wildest and most neglected portions of the British empire, in the Scilly Islands, in New South Wales, in the wildernesses of Africa and America. Having been encouraged by recent events, and by an increase of funds derived from the contributions of a liberal public, it has extended, within the last ten years, the range of its labours into Bengal, where it now maintains three episcopally

ordained missionaries, (one more is on his way hither), and is the chief contributor to an institution in which all the three presidencies are equally interested, the establishment of Bishop's College, Calcutta,—of which the avowed and appropriate objects are to superintend and forward the translation and publication of the Scriptures in the languages of India, the education of youth, both native and European, (and selected in equal proportions from Bengal, Madras, Ceylon, and Bombay), in such a manner as to qualify them, as schoolmasters, for the diffusion of general knowledge among the natives, and, as missionaries, to impart that saving knowledge, without which the value of human acquirements is small indeed. It is on these grounds, and with a more immediate view to the present unfinished state of this establishment especially, (as an institution of no foreign or distant interest to those whom I am addressing, but which only wants your bounty to enable its conductors to do that of which they are most desirous, and extend its operations to this very neighbourhood, and to every part of the Western as well as the Eastern coast of this vast peninsula), that I respectfully but with confidence appeal to a bounty, to which appeal has never yet been made in vain.

And, as you desire the glory of God, and that the truth of His Son should be made known to every creature under Heaven; as you covet the happiness of mankind, and that innocent blood should be no longer shed amongst us; as you long

for the salvation of souls, and that those who serve and love you here should feel a yet purer and stronger affection for you in Paradise; as you love your own souls, and would manifest the sincerity of your grateful faith in that Saviour by whom you are redeemed, I exhort, I advise, I entreat, yea, in the name of my Master and yours, in the name of Jesus, Son of God Most High, I demand, in this cause, your assistance and your offerings.

The Son of God, indeed, must reign, be the people never so unquiet! The Gospel will finally triumph, let us neglect or oppose it as we may! But woe be in that day of God's power to those who have set themselves against His Church's infant weakness! and woe be to those minor or more timid sinners who have not lent their hand to His harvest! "Curse ye Meroz," said the angel of the Lord, "curse ye bitterly the inhabiters thereof, because they went not forth to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty!" But of you, my brethren, I am persuaded better things; and, both as knowing your liberality, and as desiring that your bounty may be made beneficial to your own souls and to those interests which you seek to forward, let me entreat you to devote those good works to God and His Son alone, by a lively faith, by a more excellent repentance, by a fervent prayer—that while you build an ark for others, you may not yourselves be shut forth and perish—and by a participation, let me add, in the blessed body and blood of Him by whose merit

alone we obtain, either that our alms-deeds or prayers can be remembered or accepted before His Father.

And, O Merciful God, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by the sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit, grant us, by the same Spirit, to have a right judgement in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort, through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth, with thee, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

SERMON XII *.

THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD.

[Preached August 5, 1825, on the Consecration of the Church of Secrole, near Benares.]

GEN. xxviii. 16, 17.

And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, how dreadful is this place! this is none other than the House of God, and this the gate of Heaven.

THIS was the natural and touching exclamation of the patriarch Jacob, when, in his lonely and perilous journey from Canaan to the land of the Chaldees, the God of his fathers appeared to him in a dream

* This Sermon was published at Calcutta, with the following dedication:

TO WILLIAM AUGUSTUS BROOKE, ESQUIRE, SENIOR JUDGE, &c. &c. &c., SIR FREDERIC HAMILTON, BART. COLLECTOR, WILLIAM JOHN SANDS, ESQUIRE, SECOND JUDGE, AND THE OTHER CIVIL AND MILITARY OFFICERS OF THE CITY AND DISTRICT OF BENARES, THE FOLLOWING SERMON, PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST, IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED, AS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THEIR MUNIFICENT ZEAL FOR THE INTERESTS OF TRUE RELIGION, AND THEIR FRIENDLY AND GRATIFYING ATTENTIONS TO THEIR MUCH OBLIGED AND FAITHFUL HUMBLE SERVANT, THE AUTHOR.

to confirm him in his faith and service, and to encourage him in his wanderings with the assurance of an unseen and Almighty Protector.

At that time an outcast, in some degree, from the tents of his father Isaac, and a fugitive from the anger of a justly offended brother; a forlorn and needy wanderer, he had laid him to sleep on the sands of the wilderness, his head supported on a pillow of stone, and his staff and scrip his only riches. But in his dream he saw Heaven opened, and "behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven, and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord, the God of Abraham thy father and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that of which I have spoken to thee. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not! and he said, how dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this the gate of Heaven!"

In this memorable history are many circum-

stances which might afford us useful lessons, and any one of which would be a sufficient and copious subject for our morning's meditation. The first and most striking, perhaps, is the strange and aweful difference which frequently is found between the manners in which the same persons are accounted of by man and by God; and how little the Lord seeth as man seeth, in His estimate and choice of those whom He delights to favour. Who that had seen the forlorn son of Isaac in his journey over that desolate land, unsheltered, unattended, on foot, and struggling with fatigue and hunger, "a Syrian ready to perish" in the waste howling wilderness, would have guessed in this unhappy wanderer the founder of a mighty nation? Who that had known the circumstances of fraud and meanness which had compelled his flight would have expected to find in the supplanter Jacob, an Israel, "the prince of God," to whose descendants, above all the earth, the knowledge of the true God should be entrusted; and from whose loins that Saviour was, in His mortal nature, to arise, in whom not the tribes of Israel alone, but all the nations of the world were, in after days, to be pronounced blessed?

Yet thus it is that the wisdom of the wise is often put to shame; that God, even in the affairs of this world, should seem, on certain occasions, to delight in lowering the mighty and raising the humble on high; and that the riches of His grace are, sometimes, most abundantly shown in calling

sinners to repentance, and choosing out for great and glorious ends, the most contemptible and unworthy instruments. These things should make the proud man humble, and they should keep the humble man from despair. They should warn the first on how slender a thread his own power or eminence depends; and how little reason he has to think those beneath him, who, notwithstanding their present and outward inferiority, may be, in truth, of higher estimation in the eyes of God than himself, and designed by God to far greater usefulness here, and hereafter to far more exalted glory. The second may learn from them, that however insignificant he may feel himself in the eyes of men, however unable to render God worthy service, or to contribute, in any perceivable degree, to the amendment or happiness of His creatures, yet, if he perform with good will what little is in his power, that little may, by God's blessing, in its effects be infinitely multiplied; while, at all events, so far as he himself is concerned, the very least of his endeavours is not lost in the sight or memory of the Most High, nor will be forgotten in that day when the widow's mite and the believer's cup of water shall in no wise lose their reward, and when he "who has been faithful in a few things," shall, by the Judge of Heaven and Earth, be "made ruler over many things."

Another observation which we shall be naturally led to make in considering this passage of Scripture, is the constant reference and connexion, which the

promises of the Old Testament maintain with that great and glorious event, to bring us to which the Old Testament itself is only, as it were, " a Schoolmaster." To a wanderer like Jacob, it would have been a promise sufficiently comfortable to have been assured, by a heavenly vision, of the protection of God in his journey, and of a safe and prosperous return to the land which he left against his will, and constrainedly. It would have seemed an almost superfluous blessing to be told of the future greatness to which his descendants should be advanced, or to be reminded of the grant to the seed of Abraham of the land which he was now forsaking. But with neither of these points is the Heavenly promise terminated; not only is his family to become as numerous as the stars of Heaven, but through one of their number, all the nations of the earth are to be blessed; and for his seed is reserved the glory of reconciling God to man, and opening to penitent sinners the gates of a better Paradise than that which Adam had forfeited.

Nor need we wonder that this constant connexion should be found between worldly and spiritual privileges in the promises made by God to the family of Abraham. It had the effect of serving three very important purposes. In the first place, the prophecies of the Messiah were more listened to and better remembered by a gross and carnal people, from being thus, as it were, inseparably bound up and linked with promises of earthly power and greatness. Secondly, when the former

part of the prophecy was fulfilled by the increased multitude and extended power of Jacob's descendants, those descendants were naturally inclined to pay greater attention to and place more trust in the remainder, of whose fulfilment in the course of time they had thus received, as it were, the earnest. And above all, amid whatever disappointments and adversities might in the present life befall them, the constant and recorded renewal of such promises, together with all the different manifestations of God's power and protection, would serve to remind the pious Israelites that, however the possession of an earthly Canaan had failed to preserve them free from those calamities which are the common inheritance of mortals, there remained yet another and a better rest for the people of God, to which the Saviour who was promised to arise from the seed of Abraham, when He came, should open the way.

Nor can we, "on whom the ends of the world are come," whose lot is fallen to play our parts in the last great scene of nature, the concluding mystery of redemption, fail to perceive from this constant reference to the coming of Christ in the older records of God's Providence, how noble and excellent are the privileges which we enjoy; how important in the eyes of God are those blessings, the knowledge of which is now opened to our gratitude; and how great a necessity is laid on us to employ, to the furtherance of God's glory and our own salvation, those lights which the patriarchs saw dimly

and from far, those mysteries which so many prophets desired to understand, but desired in vain!

Nor is this all. For, secondly, we may learn, from the union which I have noticed as universally observable in Scripture between the promise of worldly blessings and the opportunity of Heavenly graces, that the former of these are, in the eyes of the Allwise, only so far valuable as they are means of conducing to the latter; and that whatever wealth, whatever power, whatever personal or mental or worldly advantages the Most High may in His wisdom extend to us, are not blessings in themselves, but as a way to greater blessedness,—as gifts by the use and improvement of which we are required by our God to serve the cause of His Son, and entitle ourselves, (if I may venture to use the expression,) entitle ourselves, through faith, to a more illustrious reward hereafter.

If the Israelites were endowed beyond the nations of mankind, with wise and righteous laws, with a fertile and almost impregnable territory, with a race of valiant and victorious kings, and a God who, (while they kept His ways) was a wall of fire against their enemies round about them; if the kings of the wilderness did them homage, and the lion banner of David and Solomon was reflected at once from the Mediterranean and the Euphrates; it was, that the way of the Lord might be made known by their means upon earth, and that the saving health of the Messiah might become conspicuous to all nations.

My brethren, it has pleased the Almighty that the great nation to which we ourselves belong, is a great, a valiant, and an understanding nation : it has pleased Him to give us an empire in which the sun never sets, a commerce by which the remotest nations of the earth are become our allies, our tributaries, I had almost said our neighbours ; and, by means (when regarded as human means, and distinct from His mysterious providence,) so inadequate, as to excite our alarm as well as our wonder, the sovereignty over these wide and populous heathen lands.

But is it for our sakes that He has given us these good gifts, and wrought these great marvels in our favour ? Are we not rather set up on high in the earth, that we may show forth the light by which we are guided, and be the honoured instruments of diffusing these blessings which we ourselves enjoy, through every land where our will is law, through every tribe where our wisdom is held in reverence, and in every distant isle which our winged vessels visit ?

If we value then (as who does not value ?) our renown among mankind ; if we exult (as who can help exulting ?) in the privileges which the providence of God has conferred on the British nation ; if we are thankful (and God forbid we should be otherwise) for the means of usefulness in our power ; and if we love (as who does not love ?) our native land, its greatness and prosperity ; let us see that we, each of us in our station, are promot-

ing to the best of our power, by example, by exertion, by liberality, by the practice of every Christian justice and virtue, the extension of God's truth among men, and the honour of that holy name whereby we are called.

There have been realms as famous as our own, and, (in relation to the then extent and riches of the civilized world,) as powerful and as wealthy, of which the traveller sees nothing now but ruins in the midst of a wilderness, or where the mariner only finds a rock for fishers to spread their nets. Nineveh once reigned over the east; but where is Nineveh now? Tyre had once the commerce of the world; but what is become of Tyre? But if the repentance of Nineveh had been persevered in, her towers would have stood to this day. Had the daughter of Tyre brought her gifts to the Temple of God, she would have continued a queen for ever.

There is yet a third lesson to be drawn from the vision of God at Bethel, and the exclamation which I have noticed of the patriarch Jacob; I mean the unseen and pervading presence of the Most High, "who is about our path and about our bed, and spieth out all our ways;" of whom, not in the field of Luz alone, but wherever our footsteps carry us, it may be said, that "surely God is in this place;" to whom the whole firmament of the skies is as a tent to dwell in, and the universal earth His footstool; and in whose sight and through whose favour it is, let our pilgrimage lie where it will, that *every where* is the gate of Heaven!

This notion of God as an Almighty, All-present, All-seeing and Unseen Existence, who "is not far from any of us, and in whom we live and move and have our being," is, unquestionably, a strange and aweful subject of thought, and one which cannot be agitated in our minds without a deep and almost a painful and terrifying sense of our own weakness and dependance. Even to a good man, and to one who is, on good grounds, assured of the protection and favour of his Maker, this presence not to be shunned, this power not to be resisted, this aweful eye for ever bent on our ways is, at times, oppressive as well as surprising. "Whither," said the Psalmist, "shall I go then from Thy spirit, or whither shall I go then from Thy presence? If I climb up into Heaven Thou art there. If I go down into hell Thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, peradventure the darkness shall cover me, then shall my night be turned to day. Yea, the darkness is no darkness with Thee, but the night is as clear as the day; the darkness and light to Thee are both alike!"

We are lost in the meditation of such greatness. In this sea of glory our powers, our wisdom, our life, appear to sink into nothing. What is man, (we are apt to say) that God should condescend to regard him? and what are the thoughts, the words, and works of man, that they should be able to en-

dure the constant inspection of a Judge so wise, so great, so terrible?

But if even good men, if even the best of men, must be thus at times affected by the sense of God's unseen and continual presence; if they too must, at times, find the place dreadful where they thus stand before Him; how grievous must this recollection be to those who live without God in the world; who are conscious that by their daily sins they have drawn on themselves His heaviest anger, and that they have done before His face, and under the beam of His indignant eye, such actions as they would have been afraid or ashamed to have fallen into in the presence of a mere mortal bystander?

It is a dreadful thing, when conscience reckons up her catalogue of secret guilt, to remember that every one of those crimes which were most hateful to God and to man were done with the knowledge, and in the presence, of the Judge, the severe and upright Judge of men and angels. A dreadful thing it is to know that He from whom nothing is hidden while doing, and by whom nothing is forgotten when done, was there in the midst of our foulest lurking-place, in the assembly of our guilty friends and accomplices, His eye bent on our deeds, His anger kindled by our wickedness, and His arm, perhaps, upraised to strike us down to death and hell, if His mercy had not interfered to afford us a little longer time for repentance. A dreadful thing it is to say, "surely God was in this place, when I cast my eyes so carefully around and flat-

tered myself that my uncleanness, my robbery, or my fraud was hid in darkness and solitude. God was in this place, when I deformed His image with drunkenness, and when my mouth was filled with the words of lust and blasphemy. God was in this place, when I called on His holy name to obtain credit for my falsehood, and challenged His power to punish me if I dealt untruly with my neighbour. And God is in this place, and beholds my present hardness and impenitent heart; He knows and sees my lingering fondness for the sins which I am pretending to abandon; and He is waiting, perhaps, even now, for the conduct which I shall now adopt, the resolution which I shall now follow, to determine whether my lot shall be hereafter among the children of light, or whether His Spirit shall be withdrawn from me, (it may be,) for ever!"

Surely, my friends, the presence of our Creator, our Saviour, our Judge, and our King, is to all of us a matter of deep and serious concernment! If the Almighty were at this moment to make Himself visible to our eyes; if we beheld, like the Israelites in Horeb, His glory as it were a consuming fire, shining forth from amid the darkness of the cloudy firmament; if we beheld Him, like Isaiah, on His throne exceeding high, with the many winged seraphin around, exclaiming Holy, Holy, Holy; if we were caught up, like St. John in the Revelation, to the open gates of Heaven, and beheld in the midst of its sea of glass, and beneath

its rainbow canopy, that seat on which He who sitteth is in brightness as a jasper and a sardine stone; or if that vision were shown to us which came to Daniel, when the Ancient of Days did sit on the cloud with His ten thousand times ten thousand angels, when the fiery stream went forth before Him, when the judgement was begun, and the books of life were opened;—should we not be led in this case to cry out with the Israelites, let not God speak with us lest we die!—should we not say, with Isaiah, woe is me for I have seen the Lord the God of Israel!—or what posture of body should we think sufficiently humble; what form of behaviour too strict, too cautious, too reverent, in such a presence? How should we endeavour to restrain our lips from evil, our thoughts from wandering, and our inclinations from whatever might offend Him?

Alas, have we forgotten how thin a screen that is which separates us from this glorious and aweful spectacle of Jehovah's Majesty! Let but the word go forth from His mouth, let but one of His innumerable ministers cut the thread of our days, and set our spirit free from the curtains of this bodily tabernacle, and in a moment we should perhaps be introduced to that very scene of which the thought is so dreadful to us. In a moment our soul would find itself introduced to the vast world of invisible beings; would behold, it may be, the angels of God ascending and descending as ministers of His will between Heaven and earth! and our Maker

Himself in His boundless glory, and our Redeemer standing at His right hand! This moment, while I speak, this prospect is offered for the first time to many who, in the different nations of the world, are passing from life into eternity; this moment it may be offered to any of us who are here assembled. Surely the Lord is in this place, and we know it not, how dreadful is this place! This place may to each of us become, according as we are prepared for the passage, the gate of hell or Heaven!

The practical effects which considerations like these should produce in our lives and actions, are too plain to need my pointing out to you. If these things are true, (and their truth is proved, not only from revealed but natural religion) what manner of persons ought we to be in holiness and pureness of living? But if there be one time or place more than another where the feeling of this presence of God should possess and govern us, it must be when we are avowedly assembled for the purpose of acknowledging His presence by prayer and praise in these holy buildings which are called after His name, and which the usual and decent reverence of mankind has concurred to set apart from profane and secular purposes.

This separation, indeed, by some outward mark of reverence, of things devoted to the service of God from those which serve the ordinary uses of the present life, is a practice, which seems enjoined by nature itself, and which has been observed

by all nations and by almost all religious sects or parties.

It is, indeed, most true, (and I have laboured in vain if I have not brought the conviction home to your minds,) it is true that the earth is the Lord's and all that is therein; that the open field, the private dwelling, the ship, the house of merchandize, the highway, the forest and the fell, are, each of them, on proper occasions, a suitable scene of prayer; and each and all of them, as scenes of God's pervading presence, should be hallowed by our unending duty, by our aspirations ever bent on Heaven, our innocency of heart and of life, our submission of every word and thought to the governance and glory of the Most High. But such is the weakness of our mortal state, that a religion thus widely diffused would infallibly become weakened and diluted, unless there were some certain rallying points of attention and of reverence, in which our hearts should be more closely drawn to God, and our thoughts composed to a stricter sense of His neighbourhood.

We find it in the institution of the Sabbath, (an institution which, if it were of human authority alone, would, for its practical wisdom and utility, deserve the praise and imitation of all who give laws or set examples to mankind,) we find how needful it is that the love and service which we ought to render every day, should, if we would have them paid at all, be on some days paid more strictly. And, if we desire to remember God on the ocean

and in the field, if we desire to bear His image with us through the crowded and busy walks of life, and to recollect effectually that the universe is His temple, it is well that some portions of this vast whole should be divided and set apart in our ideas, as associated with customary piety, and unprofaned by secular mixtures.

Accordingly, even in the heathen world, "secernere sacra profanis," was accounted the duty of a king, while kings were yet the priests as well as leaders of their people. The rude stone altars of the ancient patriarchs, yea the very pillar of Luz, which this Jacob reared in memory of his glorious vision, were, by solemn prayer and by the pouring on of oil and wine, devoted to the thoughts of an invisible world and the service of the God of Abraham. The tabernacle first, and afterwards either temple, had their solemn feasts of dedication; and even in the latter days of the Jewish covenant, and when the temple of God in Jerusalem was so soon to be given up by its Heavenly King to that common destruction which chastised His rebellious subjects, we still see the Son of God, all gentle and gracious as was His usual character, aroused to a sense of wrath by the indignities offered to His Father's shrine; and on this provocation, and in this quarrel only, assuming to Himself the power of an earthly king, and inflicting on the corrupt guardians of the sanctuary the terrours of an earthly chastisement.

The God of the ancient patriarchs, the God of

the Jews, the God and Father of Him whose name we bear, is the God of the Christians still; human nature is still the same, and in us, no less than in them, it requires these outward appliances and associations, which attune the mind to a solemn and serious harmony, and enlist the senses on the side of the soul and its everlasting interests. The temple of God, which was soon to perish, was holy notwithstanding; and, while it lasted, the house of prayer, and of prayer only. The Church of God, which is to endure for ever, does this demand a less reverence at our hands? or is it not meet that these buildings, where that Church assembles to plume her wings and prepare her flight for her everlasting and Heavenly habitation, should, as the instruments of a more illustrious covenant than that of bulls and goats, receive at our hands a still humbler and more constant reverence?

It is for this cause, and fortified by this great example, that in the primitive Church, and in the humble but golden days of Christian zeal and courage, the tombs, the caves, the lowly and secret cells where the scattered congregations assembled to sing hymns to Christ, bear witness by their inscriptions, remaining at the present day, with how deep reverence they were approached, and with how solemn services they were appropriated to the honour of the Lamb, and to the memory of His saints and martyrs. It is for this cause, and encouraged by so vast a cloud of witnesses, that the more recent Church of Christ has continued to call down an

appropriate blessing on those temples which national or individual piety has reared to such holy purposes; and for this cause it is, and to no superstitious end, and, as we trust, from no presumptuous principle of will-worship, that we have this day offered the work of your munificence, in a public and solemn manner, to Him from whom we have received all things!

Let not him assume the name of Christian who is wilfully or willingly wanting in his token of respect to even the building thus hallowed by its destination; let not him lay claim to the character of a devout and rational worshipper, who forgets that, though God is every where, His blessing may be more largely given in one place than in another; and that no places can with greater propriety have hope of such a privilege, than those temples which are called after His name, and which have been repeatedly distinguished as the scene of His mercies!

Yea, rather, let the sense of the high privileges of which we are or may be partakers here; the communion with God which we here enjoy; the union with His Son, which through His body and blood we are not afraid to aspire to; the gift of the Holy Ghost, which our accepted though imperfect prayers may here obtain from the Giver of every good thing; inspire us to a reverence not only of the body but of the mind, a submission of ourselves to His holy will and pleasure, and an ardent longing after those celestial habitations where, not

through the dark glass of faith, or the long and dim perspective of hope deferred, but in the flesh shall we see that Lord, who now, though unseen by mortal eyes, is present to reward or punish us.

Where two or three, said Christ, are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them! "Surely God is in this place, though we behold Him not! How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this the gate of Heaven!"

SERMON XIII.

SIN AND GRACE.

[Preached at St. Mary's, Madras, March 4, 1826.]

ROMANS vii. 24, 25.

Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death! I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

A VERY touching and natural complaint is expressed, and a very seasonable and efficacious consolation afforded in the former and latter parts of this passage of Scripture, which contains, indeed, in very few words, a comprehensive and forcible view of the necessities and the hopes of a Christian. The natural misery of man is expressed in the heaviness of that sorrow which, when abstracted from the consideration of redemption through Christ, made St. Paul declare himself most wretched; and the merciful deliverance of man is no less warmly and gratefully acknowledged in that noble burst of rapture wherein he magnifies the favour bestowed on him, and thanks his God for his escape, through his crucified Lord and Saviour, from the body of death.

Without these distinct yet blended feelings; with-

out a sense, and a mournful sense, of the natural weakness and forlorn condition of mankind, and more particularly of his own condition; and without an earnest and thankful hope of God's help and mercy through His Son, it is hardly too much to say that no man can be a genuine Christian. If he is deficient in the former of these feelings; if, not acknowledging his own helplessness, he trusts in himself that he is strong, he cannot ask the aid of Christ, nor will that blessed and mighty aid be offered to him. If he is deficient in the latter, he must also want that love for his Redeemer which arises from a sense of His benefits; he must want that reliance on his God, which only can save us from despair. It shall, therefore, be the aim of my present discourse to lay before you, shortly and clearly, the nature and the grounds of both these mental habits; and, at the same time, to point out and illustrate the tenour of the apostle's reasoning in that remarkable passage of Scripture from which the words of my text are taken.

The Epistle to the Romans, it is always necessary to bear in mind, was addressed, in the first instance, to individuals of the Jewish nation, who, though they had so far believed in Christ as to acknowledge Him for their Messiah, were very far from a right understanding of the nature of His errand among men, or of the blessed and wonderful effects of His merits, His intercession, and His sufferings. They denied, in fact, that truth in which the main secret of the Christian system lay,

the forgiveness of sins by His one sacrifice of Himself once offered; or at best they confined the necessity of such an atonement to the blinded Gentiles alone, without admitting that the race of Israel required any further aid than was supplied by the law of Moses.

To those who were led by that glorious light which, in the wilderness, rested on the mercy-seat of the ark, and in subsequent ages shone with a different, but not less clear and miraculous illumination, in the writings of so many prophets, what room, they argued, was left for further knowledge? By those who had the divinely imposed seal of circumcision, and were themselves the kindred of Christ, what further proof of God's favour was required or could be looked for? And, by those who walk after the whole and perfect rule of God's commandments, could any condemnation be feared, could any further atonement be needed?

To cure this lofty opinion of themselves is St. Paul's scope through the greater part of this Epistle; and the principles on which he reasons are, perhaps, of matchless ingenuity and clearness. He begins by proving that which, indeed, the best informed among the Jews have themselves allowed, and of which the experience of the world affords abundant and melancholy evidence, that the Gentile and the Jew were alike transgressors before God. He shows that the circumcision on which they so much relied, was in itself a badge of their profession, a distinctive mark of God's favour to

those who kept the law, but no more to be pleaded as an atonement for the breach of the law, than the uniform of a soldier is an excuse for his transgression of those articles of war, which that very uniform enhances his obligation to keep inviolate. The question of the law itself he treats in a more elaborate manner, by urging, both that the publication of a law contains in itself no atonement for its transgression; and still further, that such a law could do no more than show men their danger, without furnishing the means of escape, and thus would leave them more wretched than it found them.

The argument thus brought forward is obscure, perhaps, though just and subtle. A familiar illustration may explain it. If I see my neighbour riding furiously towards the brink of a precipice, I do well, indeed, to cry to him to stop his horse; but if his horse have the mastery, no benefit will arise from my warning. If I tell a man who is tempted to commit adultery, that the consequences of such a crime will be infamy here and everlasting ruin hereafter, I tell him, indeed, a sad and dismal truth; but, if his passions so enslave him, that, while acknowledging the goodness of my counsel, he professes himself unable to follow it, it is plain that such advice has only the effect of enhancing his folly, and rendering his sin more exceedingly sinful.

Now this was the case with the law of Moses; and it must, from the constitution of our nature, be

the case with every law and every rule of conduct which can be given, unless there be given at the same time a power of keeping the law; a mastery over those passions, the indulgence of which is prohibited; and a pardon and atonement for the transgressions of which we have been previously guilty. Now as the former of these was in no degree supplied, and the latter in a very imperfect manner supplied, by the moral and ceremonial law of Moses; it followed that the law of Moses by itself fell short of our necessities, and that neither the Gentile nor the Jew could stand upright in the sight of God, without the preventing grace and atoning sacrifice which our Lord brought to light in His Gospel.

It is thus that St. Paul, with admirable precision of dexterity, avoids the necessity of ascribing to the law an efficacy which it did not possess, while he admits, in the fullest terms, that praise and excellence of the law for which the Jew was chiefly anxious; its Divine original, its inherent purity, its adaptation to the happiness and virtue of mankind.

Every commandment of God, he allows, was just and holy. But those commandments (which were, in truth, only declarations of God's displeasure against particular sins) gave their hearers, indeed, a sufficient warning as to the danger of indulging in those sins, but conferred no power to overcome the force of passion, no opening of escape from the temptations by which they were surrounded. "We know," observes St. Paul, "that

the law is spiritual, but I am carnal. I am a mere fleshly being, weak and easily tempted, sold unto sin, the bondslave of my evil passions and my evil habits." "For," he adds, shortly afterwards, "I delight in the law of God after my inward man." My reason, my soul, the spiritual part of me acknowledges the excellence of the commandments of God; and, as a rational being, I sincerely desire to conform to them. "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law that is in my mind." I perceive my mere animal propensities contending against, and overpowering that line of conduct which reason acknowledges to be the best, and "bringing me into captivity to that law which is in my members, those sinful habits which are inherent in my body, and in the indulgence of which alone my animal nature finds delight. "Oh, wretched," therefore, "wretched man that I am! who will deliver me from the body of this death," this mortal and deadly nature which thus presses down my soul to sin and to the grave, and clogs her flight to that Heaven which is her proper habitation?

This, doubtless, is a state of exceeding terrour and misery, and one which fully justifies the passionate exclamation of St. Paul, inasmuch as no danger is so dreadful as that which we incur with our eyes open; no sufferings so keen as those which we bring on ourselves, no state so degrading as subjection to the blind caprice of a madman, or an irrational animal.

It is related of a bloody tyrant in ancient times, or it was the fiction of the poets to describe the excess of tyranny, that it was his frequent and horrible pleasure to bind the living to the dead, to condemn his lingering victims to endure for days and nights the cold embrace and loathsome touch of some swollen and rotting carcase, which they themselves were ere long to resemble, and with whose wretched dust their own was to moulder away. Such may be thought the bitterest dregs of human misery; yet hardly inferior, perhaps, to the reasonable soul of man, is the bondage and burthen of that mass of fleshly appetites, whose earthly bands restrain its every nobler aspiration; whose increasing corruptions pollute while they destroy; whose propensities tend downwards to their native clay, and whose heritage are the grave and hell!

Nor must this hideous picture be regarded as the creature of imagination; nor is it of his own case only that St. Paul is speaking; though he, like other men, had felt the bondage which he mourns, and, happier than many men, had been greatly and gloriously rescued. It is a complaint in which every man must sympathize, who has examined seriously his own heart and conscience, who has ever sought to forsake a single sinful practice, or attempted to cleanse his soul from the stain of a single unholy desire. Wickedness is often called blindness, and, as it should seem at first, with sufficient reason; since a course of wickedness is so

utterly contrary to the visible interest of man, that none but the blind, it might be thought, would court their ruin. But if wickedness proceeded from blindness only, should we so often find, as we are unhappily doomed to do, that they who have eaten most largely of the tree of knowledge, are often the furthest removed from the tree of life? And that they who, of all men, best know their duty and interest, are often of all others the most backward to follow either? The profligate whose vices are dragging him to an early grave, will tell you, perhaps with tears, that he knows but cannot escape his danger; and many a man of lofty spirit and lofty understanding has mourned in secret over those pursuits by which his outward attention was engrossed, and exclaimed with one of our poets,

> "Why was I born with such a sense of virtue,
> With such keen horrour of debasing guilt,
> And yet a slave to such impetuous passion?"

The complaint, I repeat, is as old as the world itself, and as familiar as our daily rest and nourishment; nor is it a misfortune of which the Jew or the Christian have alone been rendered sensible. "It may seem," said Araspes to Cyrus king of Persia, "that there are at once two souls, an evil and a good, within me, between whose opposite counsels my will hangs wavering and irresolute, and which, as either gets the better, determine me to vice or to goodness[1];" but of these alas! how

[1] Xenophon Cyrop. vi. 1. 41.

greatly is the evil spirit superior in natural strength to that which is wise and holy!

The enquiry would be too long and too metaphysical; it is, perhaps, too hopeless to attempt, with our imperfect knowledge of the ways of God, to give a reason why things are suffered thus to be, or to trace to its source that mighty strife between good and evil which is coeval with all created things, in which the angels first, and afterwards our parents fell; and which, crushed as the serpent's head has been by Christ, continues still, and, till the final triumph of our Redeemer, must continue to shake with its convulsive struggles the pillars of the universe. It is enough for us to know that we are by nature sick unto death, but that we have a great Physician at hand to heal us. It is sufficient for us to recollect that we must not complain of evils for which a remedy is provided; and that the apostle himself, who would seem to plunge us in despair by the picture which he draws of our natural condition, bursts forth, immediately after, into a noble exclamation of thankfulness to that God who hath delivered us through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Of the means whereby this great deliverance was effected; of the dreadful ransom which the Son of God has paid for our souls; and how, by His own dying agonies, He stopped the jaws of that death which else had gaped insatiably for all, I need not, as I am addressing Christians I surely need not, proceed to treat more largely. I shall, therefore,

only observe, that the two points in which that deliverance consisted were, precisely, those which, according to St. Paul's argument, could not be supplied by any human code of morality, nor even by the Jewish law itself and the commandments given from Mount Sinai. These points are pardon and grace; pardon for past offences, grace to enable us to lead new lives, and to make us less unworthy inhabitants of that Heaven whither Christ is gone before. The one restores us to the same degree of favour with God which our nature possessed before its fall; the other supports us against those temptations under which we must else, of necessity, again have fallen; and thus, by the Christian covenant, are boasting and despair alike excluded; boasting by the sense of our natural inability to please the Most High, and despair by the knowledge that the Most High Himself is on our side, and that if we fall not away from Him, we may in security look on the assaults of our spiritual and fleshly enemies.

From all which I have said, the following practical conclusions may be drawn. First, since our condition is by nature so perilous; since our passions are so strong, and our flesh so frail and prone to evil, what constant vigilance do those passions and propensities require, of which St. Paul complains so heavily? If we were shut up in the same den with a wild beast; if we were opposed to an armed enemy; if we were steering a vessel through an unknown sea, amid the dash of waves and the

glimmering of breakers, we should need, I apprehend, no admonition to be watchful and diligent. Alas! my friends, our own hearts are wilder than the savage of the woods; our own hearts, uncontrouled, are more formidable than the deadliest adversary; our own hearts are more changeable and deceitful than the winds, the waves, the depths, and shallows of the ocean. Watch, then, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. Watch and pray! Without prayer to God "the watchman waketh but in vain[1];" and without an answerable watchfulness and care for our souls, displayed in the usual tenour of our lives and actions, our idle prayers will be only an offence to God.

Nor should the difficulty of the task hold us excused from attempting it; seeing that what is necessary to be done, it becomes us, at least, to try to do; and what God commands, we may be sure that He will also give us strength to accomplish. Of ourselves we can do nothing, but we can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us; and the same glorious Being who commanded the lame to walk, gave his limbs, at the same time, ability to perform His bidding! So far indeed from the weakness of the flesh being able to destroy the hope of the sincere and industrious Christian, "My grace," saith Christ, "is sufficient for thee[2]:" and the triumph of that grace is shown, not only in enabling the reasonable soul to subdue

[1] Psalm cxxvii. 1.

[2] 2 Cor. xii. 19.

the body wherein it dwells, but in sanctifying that body into a temple of the Holy Ghost, and raising it hereafter from the grave to be a palace of unspeakable glory, wherein the pure and spotless soul shall, through all eternity, reside, to the praise of Him "who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself[1]."

But in the promise thus held out of this gracious gift to men (the gift, as the beloved disciple has stated it, "of power to become the sons of God[2];") in that promise itself is implied a due recurrence to the external means of grace, those instruments, if I may so speak, of God's overflowing bounty to man, whereby we draw near to our Maker's throne, and lay hold, like Esther in the Jewish annals, on the golden sceptre of His pardon, His support and favour. It is needful not only to believe in Christ with our hearts, but to confess Him with our lips unto salvation; not only to endeavour to glorify Him in our lives, but devoutly to seek, through the channels of prayer, of hearing the word and of study of the Scripture, and through the ordinances which He has left behind, that help from on High by which alone we are more than conquerors. To such of you as have not yet renewed, in your own persons, that solemn and blessed covenant, which in your infancy was contracted for you by your

[1] Philip. iii. 21. [2] St. John i. 12.

sureties, an opportunity will be on Thursday next held out both to profess before men, in express and solemn terms, your faith in your crucified Saviour, and to solicit for His sake, and in the manner which His holy apostles have appointed, the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

And all who are religiously and devoutly disposed, all who feel the burden of their sins, and desire in future to live less unworthy of their calling, all who seek for help and life through the blood of Christ alone, and all who are in charity with their neighbours, forgiving those who have done them wrong, and desirous to make amends, so far as their power shall reach, to all those, if such there are, whom they have injured, all such are invited on the next Lord's Day, to partake with us in the solemn commemoration of the greatest and saddest mercy which ever was shown to man, and to draw forth life and health to their souls from the body and blood of their broken and bleeding Saviour.

May the days which intervene be to all of you, my brethren, a period of diligent self-examination, of frequent study of the Scriptures, of frequent and earnest prayer. And not for yourselves only let those holy prayers be offered; but for us who watch for your salvation; for those young plants, of faith whom we are seeking to train up in the ways of peace and pardon; and for those heathen multitudes, whose eyes are bent on us for good or evil, in all the dealings of our lives, and all the cere-

monies of our religion, and of whose souls one day a strict account must be rendered by all whose example has made the way of truth be evil spoken of, and all who have not employed to the good of their fellow men, and to the glory of the Most High, the abilities, the influence, the leisure, and the abundance which the wise and good God has entrusted to them.

SERMON XIV.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD.

[Preached at Cawnpoor, October 11, 1824.]

St. Matt. xxii. 37—40.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

This beautiful summary of duty, even before the time of Christ, appears to have been proverbial among the Jews, as the statement of those objects which the law of Moses was intended to secure and illustrate. But whoever was its original author, (something like it, though not the very words themselves, may be found in the Psalms, and in the prophet Micah a still nearer approach to its import[1]) yet as thus solemnly adopted by Christ it becomes entitled to the acceptance and obedience of every Christian, and an adherence to its rule as among the surest pledges which any Christian can

[1] Micah vi. 8.

offer of his continuance in the faith, and that his faith is such as may hereafter profit him. A sense, indeed, of God's goodness, and a desire to render ourselves acceptable to Him, is the only principle of action which a wise and gracious God can be supposed to regard with pleasure. We are God's children, not His slaves; and it is our love which He requires, as much as, and still more than, our obedience. If this last were all which He sought for, He might have compelled it by an overruling necessity, or have accompanied His commands with such resistless and miraculous influence, as should prevent even the possibility of rebellion. But He demands a reasonable service, a warm and affectionate energy which shall urge us, not only to fly from hell, but to evince our gratitude for the hopes of Heaven; by kindness, therefore, and long suffering, He endeavours to excite our love; and even when His menaces or His judgements rouse us to a necessary perception of our weakness, our guilt and our danger, His assurances of mercy never fail to accompany His terms.

Accordingly, though in the nature of the Mosaic law, and in the leading circumstances of its promulgation, His immediate purpose was rather to display His justice than His mercy; to set forth in fiery characters His anger against sin; and, by a wholesome and searching severity, to prepare men's hearts for the healing dispensation of the Gospel; yet, even here we find, through the Scriptures of the elder covenant, the mercy of God more fre-

quently insisted on than either His justice, His might, or His majesty. We find ourselves invited to "praise the Lord for His goodness;" "to taste and see how good the Lord is, and how great are His tender mercies on them that call upon Him[1]." Jehovah too sometimes condescends to reason with His unthankful people, and to appeal to the men of Judah themselves, whether more could have been done than He had done for His vineyard[2]? And in that dreadful moment when God Himself came down to give forth His laws to men, and by a discovery of that holiness which He requires from His servants, to open men's eyes to their own guilt and their need of the promised Intercessor; even then, from the midst of thunderings and darkness, and surrounded with every circumstance of majesty and terrour, the Almighty makes His strongest appeal to their love, and not to their weakness, and He lays claim to their obedience as their Deliverer and their Friend, "the God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage[3]."

And since, by the Jews themselves, the principle of love and thankfulness, the love of God, and, for God's sake, the love of our neighbour, were recognised as the sum and substance of the law; since these were the two commandments which its other precepts, and its external ceremonies, served only to defend and illustrate; and since these were in a still more conspicuous manner enforced and con-

[1] Psalm cvii. 8. xxxiv. 8. [2] Isaiah v. 3, 4.
[3] Exod. xix. 16—19. xx. 2.

firmed by the Messiah, we might, perhaps, from this admitted truth alone, establish the truth of our Lord's declaration, that He came to fulfill and not to change the precepts of the ancient covenant; to make its promises more blessed and its duties more easy by a clearer discovery of those hopes and privileges which were dimly shadowed out before; and by replacing with stronger motives and more powerful spiritual assistance, those sacrifices and ceremonies on which the ancient Israelite relied for the expiation of his sins, and the constant recollection of his duties. Yet still, and now more than ever, the claims of God are founded on our love and thankfulness. He expects them, indeed, no longer from a single favoured race, as the God who had broken their chains, who had led them from a land of slavery, and loaded them with many temporal advantages; but He has laid on all the nations of mankind a more precious and extensive obligation, as their Maker, their Redeemer, and their Sanctifier, their Deliverer from that fear of death under which all nature, till His coming, had languished; and from that bondage of sin which is ten thousand fold more terrible than the fetters of an earthly tyrant.

It is thus that the message which the Only Begotten brought into the world was proclaimed both by Himself and His angels to be "good tidings of great joy[1]." It is thus that the nature of the Al-

[1] St. Luke xi. 10.

mighty is described in the New Testament as love, in its fountain and original; and that we are called on to behold and return that regard which He has shown to mankind in that, while we were yet sinners, He gave His only Son to die for our salvation.

This obedience, indeed, of affection, this free-will offering of ourselves is, so far as we are able to judge, the most material distinction between the best and the worst, the happiest and most miserable among the creatures of God, the angels who have kept their first estate, and those spirits for whom everlasting fire is prepared. Those guilty and most unhappy beings have faith, we know, for they "believe and tremble[1]." We know likewise that, when in the exercise of their malice towards mankind, they were checked by the commanding voice of the Messiah, they too could pray to Him for a little longer forbearance of punishment; they too made haste to relinquish their victims at a word, and yielded to the injunctions of their conqueror an immediate and terrified obedience.

But they are not prayers like these, they are not services of this description which, in the nature of things, can be well pleasing or acceptable to the Almighty. Which of you would choose such obedience in a servant? In a son, which of you would endure it? The fear of God is indeed, in the words of Solomon, "the beginning of wisdom[2]." Of

[1] St. James ii. 19.

[2] Prov. i. 7.

knowledge and of faith it is the first fruit, and the primary foundation of active and habitual holiness. But if our knowledge and our faith bring forth no further increase; if our holiness advances no higher in its Heavenward progress, so far will be such a faith from availing to our salvation, that better had it been for our souls had we never known nor believed!

Nor is it only as affording a noble and more acceptable principle of action than fear, that the love of God is thus valuable in God's eyes, and thus indispensable to those who call themselves His servants. Those actions which proceed from love, however powerless in themselves (as powerless all our actions must be) to contribute to the happiness, or augment the glories of Him whom the angels serve, and whose praise all creation shouts forth with her ten thousand voices, have yet in the nature of things, and judging from the analogy of the visible world, a claim on Him to whom they are offered. We feel ourselves that the affection of a servant or a child, endears to us and renders valuable in our eyes, even the poorest and humblest effort by which that affection is expressed or manifested. Nor can we doubt that infinite as is the distance between man and his Maker; yet by Him to whom all His works are known, the love even of His weakest servant must be regarded with a similar complacency, and that the affection which we feel within ourselves towards our unseen and Almighty Benefactor is reflected back from Him towards

ourselves with an intenseness so much greater than our own, as God excells us in the clearness of His views and the benevolence of His nature. It is faith which enables us to contemplate God, but it is love which diminishes the distance between God and ourselves; and it is love alone which, under Christ, can bring us to Heaven, or, when we are entered there, can make Heaven a place of happiness.

But enough has been said to show the necessity and value of a genuine love for God; and I would now proceed to point out, to the best of my ability, the most probable and efficacious means of awakening such a love within ourselves; as well as the effects which it may be expected to produce on our thoughts, our tempers, and our daily and hourly actions. And to obtain a knowledge of these, little more, perhaps, is necessary than to examine the causes which produce and increase in us an affection for earthly objects; inasmuch as, notwithstanding the mysterious nature of many of God's dealings with us, and more particularly of that spiritual and sanctifying influence which He exerts over our minds, and without which, it must never be forgotten, no amiable or holy principle can be generated in our breasts; yet in this love, whensoever derived, there is in truth nothing mysterious; and the love which we feel for God can differ from the love which we feel for an earthly parent in nothing but the intensity of its obligation, and the infinite worthiness of its object.

Examine then your hearts, all you that have parents, and ask them why you love your father and your mother? why you delight to serve and please them? why you obey their wishes from affection, not from fear? why you esteem all which you can do but too little to promote their happiness, and rejoice to incur inconvenience yourselves so it may evince your attachment towards them!

You love them, you will doubtless answer, because they have first loved you; because from them you derive your life and all its chequered series of interest and enjoyment; because they nursed you when you were weak, instructed you when you were ignorant, endured you when you were froward, trained you up, it may be, to distinction and prosperity in the life which now is, and taught you to look forward to everlasting happiness in the life to come. For these and similar reasons you love your father and your mother. You do well! Continue to love them more and more, for they well deserve your best affection! But know, children of God, your Heavenly Father hath done for you greater things than these! But do you not also find that this feeling of filial love is increased and strengthened by a frequent recollection of the benefits which you have received from your parents; and that your hearts have grown warmer towards them the more you lived in their society; the longer and oftener you conversed together; and the more and greater the acts and evidences of mutual kindness which passed

between you? Is it not, unhappily, most true, that long absence and habitual disregard will always greatly damp and often entirely extinguish that affection which ought to exist, and under other circumstances, would naturally have existed between the members of the same family? Beware, then, how you neglect that species and degree of intercourse with your Heavenly Father, to maintain which His mercy permits and His word invites, and His grace, if you make use of it, enables you! Beware lest, by thinking of Him but seldom, but seldom addressing Him in prayer, and seldom hearing His voice in His Holy Scriptures and His public ordinances, you estrange yourself, by degrees, entirely from His love, and allow the pursuits and pleasures of the world to establish an empire in your heart left empty of holier affections! It is by daily prayer and daily thanksgiving, by patient study of God's word, and by patient meditation on our own condition, and on all which God has done and will do for us, that a genuine and rational love for Him is kindled in our hearts; and that we become unfeignedly attached to the Friend of whose kindness we have had so much experience.

It is, indeed, to be expected, and it therefore should by no means be allowed to discourage the inexperienced Christian, that at first, and in the earlier stages of our approach to God, we should experience but little of that ardour of devotion, those pleasures of earnest piety which are, in this world, the reward of love as well as its most con-

vincing evidence. Our prayers at first will often be constrained; our thanksgivings cold and formal; our thoughts will wander from our closets to the world, and we shall have too frequent occasion to acknowledge with shame and sorrow the imperfection of those offerings which we as yet can make to our Benefactor. A religious feeling, like every other mental habit, is slowly and gradually acquired. A strong and lasting affection is not ordinarily the growth of a day; but to have begun at all is, in religion, no trifling progress; and a steady perseverence in prayer and praise will, not only, by degrees, enlist the strength of habit on the side of holiness, but will call down, moreover, and preserve to us that spiritual support and influence, without which all human efforts must be vain, but which no one will seek in vain, who seeks for it in sincerity and by the appointed channels.

But though the absence of fervour be not the produce of permitted and habitual sin, undoubtedly it must be ruinous to every well-founded hope of acquiring a genuine love for Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. In disputes between men we are taught by every day's experience that it is hard to love those whom we have injured; and that the more we feel ourselves in the wrong, the more inclined we are to view with dislike as well as apprehension, the person who has cause to be offended with us. And thus it is that every additional act of transgression indisposes our hearts the more to a faith in the gracious offers of our

King, and to an acceptance of them; and the more impossible it seems that we should be pardoned, the more sturdily and desperately do we proceed in courses of which we know that the end is death, but the dereliction of which, as we apprehend, would be now altogether fruitless.

Such a state of mind, of all others to which a sinner can be reduced on this side the grave, is surely the most terrible. It is one, however, which is more common among men than the generality of mankind imagine; and it is a danger which cannot be too often or too earnestly represented to all those who dwell carelessly, lest their habitual offences should shut the door against reconciliation; and not only so grieve the Holy Spirit as to deter Him from returning, but, even if He should vouchsafe to return, render their hearts insensible to all the ordinary methods of His mercy.

An amendment of life, indeed, and a conduct conformable to the will and word of the Most High, is the only mark I know of to distinguish a genuine love of Him from those vain and enthusiastic flights of fancy which have their origin in the fancy alone; which are consistent with indulgences the most impure, and passions the most unrestrained and unconverted; in which the devil would gladly persuade the sinner to rest contented through life, but the vanity of which will be made apparent in that season when the axe will be laid to the root of all false pretences and unfounded hopes, in the hour of death and in the day of judgement. And it

is happy for us that a point of such importance is one on which the sincere enquirer can scarcely by possibility deceive himself, inasmuch as the effects of a genuine love are such as can hardly be counterfeited, and are such, indeed, as without the inspiration and assistance of Him whose name is love, the nature of man is unable to bring forth to perfection. And among these the following are some of the most conspicuous.

In the first place, he who really loves God, will be content to depend on Him, and acquiesce with cheerfulness in all His dispensations of severity or mercy. That we do, in fact, depend on God for all which we receive, and all which we hope for, will be recognized by the decision of reason alone; and it is a truth which even an unregenerate heart may admit with fear and trembling. But a contented and hopeful dependance on God, a cheerful acquiescence in all which He determines, a frame of mind which converts into an unceasing source of pleasure our recollection of that strength on which we rely, that wisdom which is conspicuous alike in every instance of good or evil fortune; such a feeling as I have described can proceed from love alone, and I can hardly admit the existence of a genuine love of God without it.

A sense of weakness and dependance without love is always miserable. But where love is, even in the imperfect attachments of the nether world, the recollection of such dependance is never oppressive or melancholy. It is any thing but painful for a

child to cling to the embrace, the support, the comfort and provident kindness of a tender and most dear parent. It is any thing but painful to unbosom our griefs, our trials, and our difficulties to a kind and experienced and powerful friend, who shares our thoughts, who sympathizes with our sorrows, and whose hand we trace in all the more conspicuous comforts and advantages of our situation. By the favours of those whom we love and venerate we are elated, not humiliated. We are proud, not ashamed, of the obligations laid on us by a gracious sovereign, or a wise and discriminating patron, because we delight in his benefits as evidences of his regard, and identify ourselves, in a certain degree, with the excellencies of him who honours us with such a friendship. And even so in the child-like leaning of a Christian on his God, not only is fear in a great measure cast out as knowing on whom we depend, but enjoyment is enhanced for His sake, by whom all our enjoyments are bestowed; and all which we love becomes more lovely in our eyes when we say in our hearts, "And this also is my Father's bounty!"

If, on the other hand, He who hath given should take away, however we may feel the smart (and there is certainly no charm in religion which can make us impassive or insensible) a real love for God will be our best and most efficacious comfort. It will recall to our minds all the blessings which we have received, and all the far greater blessings we look for; it will silence complaint by the recol-

lection of past kindness; and withdraw our attention from present suffering by the anticipation of future and more abundant mercy. We shall deduce from our own love for God a confidence that this love is mutual, an assurance that His chastisements are mercies in disguise, and that the clouds under which our nature shudders, will, ere long, burst over our heads in blessing. "Perfect love," said he who of all men most loved Christ, and whom more than all other men, Christ in the time of His humiliation loved. "Perfect love casteth out fear[1];" or if this painful but wholesome and necessary intruder must yet at times return, and be our occasional companion through our earthly pilgrimage, it will be a distrust of ourselves, not a doubt of God; it will be mingled with a trembling joy for the continued sense of His mercy and forbearance; by the recollection of our weakness it will bind us closer to His strength, and make the blessing of His presence more precious in our eyes, by the possibility that we may, hereafter, by our own faults, deprive ourselves of that blessing.

Such lives as these are, in themselves, a continued act of prayer and thanksgiving; yet even such a life as this would not excuse us from that which is another evidence of the love, for whose good all things are made to work together, "a frequency and regularity of private and public prayer, and a diligent perusal of the Holy Scriptures." It is in

[1] 1 St. John iv. 18.

such acts as these that the soul draws nearer to its Maker; it is then that we speak to Him and hear His voice again; and that love would be a mere mockery of the name which should shun the conversation and neglect the correspondence of the person whom we most affected to esteem and honour. As the practice then of prayer, of praise, and the study of the Scriptures is the most availing and necessary course to kindle a love of God in our hearts; so is, on the other hand, a cheerful continuance in the same habitual piety the certain effect and the necessary evidence that the flame thus excited is alive and yet glowing within us.

Another necessary proof of this love is the light in which we look on sin. I need not repeat what I have already urged against the incompatibility of any gross and habitual transgression with the existence of genuine love for the Almighty. But if we take pleasure in the recollection of foregone, or the imagination of future or possible evil; if we feed our fancies with acts which we dare not perform, and witness with indifference or with unholy pleasure the transgressions of those who live around us; if we feel a regret for the indulgences which we are, by our situation in life, compelled to forego, and condemn as fanatical or enthusiastic all endeavours after a more rigid and excellent piety, a moment's consideration will show how little the love of God can dwell in us! It is a necessary part of affection to like and dislike the same objects with the person to whom we are united; and in truth, in that

particular species of affection which I am now discussing, it is scarcely possible for any one, with a true conception of the causes which led to Christ's death, to read once attentively the details of that aweful sacrifice, without experiencing, for the time at least, a loathing and horrour of those sins which it was necessary to visit so severely on the guiltless; and something like a bitter indignation against himself as one whose offences, amid the great mass of the foreseen offences of mankind, added sharpness to the thorny crown of Him who died to save us!

The last, however, and of all others the most decisive symptom of God's love residing in our hearts is, that the love of our neighbour also holds its dwelling there. It would occupy too much time (indeed I feel that I have already encroached too largely on your patience) were I to go through all the different bearings and details of this second great commandment: I would therefore merely direct your thoughts to the close connection which exists between the two, and to the utter impossibility of keeping the one while we transgress or neglect the other.

Though it were possible, (and it is a possibility which can only be supposed for the sake of argument) though it were possible, that all the other proofs of loving God should be found apart from this last and greatest, yet would this one deficiency give all the rest the lie: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God

whom he hath not seen[1]?" Where our affections are so selfish and so cold as not to throw a kindly warmth around the little circle of our friends and neighbours, the kindred of our blood, and the poor who are always with us, how can their feeble rays extend to the depth and heighth and breadth of invisible and infinite existence, of Him who is seen by the eye of faith alone, and who reveals Himself only to the pure in heart and to the merciful? How can we love our Father while we hate His children? How can we love our Redeemer, while we are indifferent to the welfare of those whom He died to save, and lives again to intercede for?

He then who loveth not his neighbour as himself is never, whatever may be his other pretensions to sanctity, a sincere and genuine lover of God. But the opposite assertion is also strictly true, and he who loveth not God most of all, will never love his neighbour as he ought to do. He wants, as we have seen, the only motive of action which is either acceptable with God, or availing against the snares of our mortal condition, the only principle which can encourage us to look for the further gracious assistance of that Spirit through whom we are conquerors.

It is, indeed, no difficult task to be liberal of fair words to others. It is, thank God, no uncommon thing where wealth is abundant, and avarice despised, and liberality held in honour, to find men

[1] 1 St. John iv. 20.

who, by no stretch of charity, can be supposed to care seriously for God, who yet are not insensible to the calls of kindness and of pity, and not unwilling to dispense some portion of their superfluities for the relief of their necessitous brethren. But of that charity which is self-denying as well as kind; of that charity which is solicitous for the souls as well as for the bodies of men; of that charity which can labour long and suffer much, as well as contribute largely; of that charity which "is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly,—hopeth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things[1]." I wish to God the instances were more frequent than my experience leads me to believe them; and I am sure, so far forth as that experience extends, that no single instance has been found in which the philanthropy was not engrafted on some species of religious feeling.

The truth is, that our practice of the two great commandments can only be effectual and progressive where they reciprocally foster and increase one another. The more we grow in love to God, the more love we shall feel for His children; and the greater real kindness we cherish and practise towards mankind, the greater and warmer thankfulness we shall be inspired with towards Him, by whom the world has been created, preserved and pardoned; to whose goodness we owe the comforts of society, the endearments of kindred and the blessings of

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. 7.

friendship; who hath in His mercy ordained men to be helpful one to another, and who has graciously made the discharge of this most necessary duty a source of the purest earthly happiness.

But of these two commandments, the love of God stands first; first in order, first in object, first in dignity; where this is really found, the other parts of holiness will, almost of necessity, follow; but where this is not sought after, their progress must be small who stumble on the threshold of religion.

Be it then your endeavour, brethren, to acquaint yourselves with all which God has done for you, with your own undeservings and His great and unfailing mercies. Be it your business to wait on Him in prayer, to converse with Him in the Scriptures, to renounce in your thoughts and actions whatever is displeasing to Him, and to practice towards His creatures, and for His sake, that mercy and meekness, that forgiveness and bounty which you hope yourselves to find from Him.

Nor fear, if you act thus, but that you will soon begin to love; fear not, if you love thus, but that you will be surely loved in return by Him who is the centre of your hopes, your imitation, and your affection. Yea, if you love thus, be sure that God already loves you; that the seed which He has sown in your heart is the first pledge and promise of His affection; and that He has already taken possession of that temple wherein, unless we cast Him forth, He hath purposed to dwell for ever.

"If a man love me," said the Son of God, "he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him[1]."

Amen, Amen! Even so, come Lord Jesus. Even so, Father of all, for Thy Son's sake descend on us, and by Thy Spirit sanctify our hearts, that they may be filled with Thy invisible presence in this dark and evil world, so that, in the world to come, we may see Thee as Thou art, and be in Thee and with Thee everlastingly.

[1] 1 John xiv. 23.

SERMON XV.

[Preached at Calcutta, Christmas Day, 1825.]

St. Luke ii. 14.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.

This is the hymn with which the angels celebrated the incarnation of our Blessed Saviour, and to us, whom the authority of our national Church, the precedent of early antiquity, and the example of the great majority of believers in every age and country invite, as at this time, to give thanks for the same illustrious display of Divine mercy, no fitter subject of devout meditation can be found than the words in which the spirits of Heaven announced that mercy to mankind.

And of the topics of reflection which the words in question offer to the mind, the following are among the most striking. In the first place, the fact itself of that sympathizing joy which the angels are represented as feeling in the event which they announced with so much celestial pomp and splen-

dour, must needs excite in us a powerful apprehension of the greatness and illustrious nature of the benefit thus extended to our race, and may convince us both that those evils are very grievous from which the coming of the Son of God was to free mankind, and those blessings are even greater than our familiarity with them leaves us always able to estimate, which could move beings, so much superior to ourselves, to express such a lively and unusual interest in them. And the inference, I think, will follow both that, in the birth of the Messiah, the spirits of Heaven recognised something far more remarkable than the birth of a mere earthly prophet, and that something far more valuable than a new and more perfect revelation of God's will was anticipated by them in their song of peace and good will to the sons of Adam.

Of earthly prophets and earthly heroes the birth had been announced, and announced by angels, in former and well-known instances. Isaac and Ishmael had each had his Heavenly harbinger, and the mother of Sampson was comforted in her lonely prayers by the promise of a distinguished offspring [1]. But in none of these instances was there the like promise displayed, in none of them was the like ardour of exultation and congratulation manifested which now brake the slumbers of the shepherds on the hill of Bethlehem; and which chaunted, this one time, in mortal ears, that harmony which swells

[1] Gen. xvii. 16. xvi. 11. Judges xiii. 5.

the choirs of Paradise. A celestial visitant, in form as a man, and suspected only to be more than man from the unmoved and terrible beauty of his countenance, a messenger indeed to mortal clay, but a messenger of too high a rank and too far removed from mortal pursuits or passions to mingle sympathies with that which was but the child of a day, or to occupy himself more or longer than his errand required with the fallen inhabitants of our planet, such was the form whose touch consumed to ashes the offering of Manoah and his wife; such he who came to Agar in the wilderness, to Zacharias in the temple; and such the three (though with respect to *one* of these a yet further mystery belongs) who reproved the incredulity of Sarah, and received the homage and hospitality of Abraham beneath the oak of Mamre[1]. The time had been when God Himself came down to speak, in the form of God, with man, in might and majesty beyond a doubt, but with no tokens of gratulation, no songs of jubilee. On Sinai was a thick and lonely darkness, a mountain smoking like a furnace, which neither man nor beast could approach, save Moses only, and which Moses himself drew near in exceeding fear and trembling. No angel shapes broke through the gloom, no angel melodies were heard in the pauses of the thunder; but the trumpet alone waxing louder and louder, and the voice of God, of which they who heard it said, "Let not God speak with us lest we

[1] Judges xiii. 20. Gen. xvi. 7. Luke i. 11. Gen. xviii. 1.

die[1]!" How different were these sights and sounds from the glory of the Lord, from the herald angel, accompanied by a multitude of the Heavenly host, and the hymn which, while it ascribed fresh glory to the Most High, spake of peace restored between Heaven and earth, and renewed good will from the Creator to His creatures.

If, however, we look back to what the angel had announced to the shepherds, "unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a SAVIOUR[2];" if we recollect that this birth was the first thing executed on earth towards reconciling mankind to God; that it was the first step towards the overturn of that evil spirit, who is the enemy and accuser of angels as well as of men; that it was the noblest instance of mercy and condescension which even Omnipotence could show, and the more noble in proportion to the wretchedness and manifold demerits of those in whose favour it was exerted, we shall not wonder that the happy and benevolent inhabitants of Heaven felt joy in the extension to other worlds of those blessings in which they themselves partook without measure; that the far-seeing cherubims beheld with delight and wonder a display of wisdom, of power, and of holiness which surpassed their most elevated contemplations, and that the seraphs loved, with augmented ardour, that good and gracious Lord who had pity on the least worthy of His creatures.

[1] Exod. xx. 19. [2] St. Luke ii. 11.

The reason, then, assigned for the exultation of the Heavenly host, is that Christ was born "a Saviour." And if we desire to ascertain in what peculiar sense the Lord Jesus was a Saviour beyond all the prophets who went before Him, we shall find, or I am much mistaken, a very considerable difficulty (on every hypothesis of His nature and functions but that which we call the orthodox one) in finding an adequate reason for the eminence and peculiarity of the title thus appropriated to Him; for the exultation expressed by the angels while thus appropriating it; and for the vast and lavish display of wonder, of prophecy, of vision, and of miracle, by which the birth, and life, and death, and resurrection, and ascension, and destined return of the Messiah, both have been and will be illustrated. Were these honours paid to Christ as to a mortal man, but taught of God and endued with an unexampled degree of God's spiritual assistance, the chosen instrument of bringing to light a more perfect and holy law of life and morals, confirmed with stronger sanctions than the law of Moses, and with that strongest sanction of all which arises from the resurrection of the dead and a future life without end? God forbid that I should underrate the benefits which, even according to this imperfect view of the Christian faith, will appear to have been conferred on man through Jesus of Nazareth. I admit that, though we were to consider Him as a human prophet only, "He spake

as never man spake[1];" I admit that a fuller stream of grace and wisdom has been poured on Him than on the most favoured sons of Adam, who had gone before or were to succeed Him; I admit that no dictates of human wisdom, no previous lesson taught by God's prophets to mankind, can equal the simple and sober majesty of the sermon on the mount, the touching softness of the parable of the lost sheep, and the returning prodigal, or the thrilling union of awe and tenderness which is inspired by His picture of the last judgement; I admit that neither Socrates, nor Moses, nor David, nor Isaiah, have left us any thing which can equal in purity and pathos His conversation during His last supper, and when bidding adieu to His disciples; I admit that the doctrine of a life after death, though intimated in many passages of the Mosaic law, and more largely dwelt on by the prophets; though deducible, in a great degree, from the dictates of natural reason, and actually deduced from those dictates by more than one distinguished heathen philosopher; though forming a part of the popular tradition of almost every nation of mankind, and though received, above all, by the great majority of the Jewish nation in its fullest extent, and with almost all the circumstances of awe and majesty with which even Christians are accustomed to clothe it; I admit that this life after death, and a

[1] St. John vii. 46.

future state of reward and punishment were never so authoritatively declared, or so forcibly represented, or so experimentally proved, as they have been to us who believe in the doctrine and resurrection of Jesus. But I maintain that all these points of difference between Christ and the preceding prophets are not enough to account for that difference which I have remarked in the honours paid to Him, and the display of Divine power and angelic praise by which His birth and person were, above all other prophets, distinguished; and I maintain, above all, that in none of these respects, nor in all of them taken together, is His claim made good to that title which, of all prophets, is given to Him alone, and which constituted the specific ground of those congratulations which the angels bore to their fellow-creatures of mankind, the illustrious title of "Saviour."

Is it from the fear of death that the world is delivered by our Lord? And is this end accomplished by the spectacle of His own glorious triumph over the grave, and over them that had the power of it? Alas, are we ignorant that to the sinner (and who is there among men that sinneth not?) his fears are but the more increased by the clearness of this discovery! The same great Moralist who hath taught us by His words, and proved to us by His own example, that the grave is but the gate to a new and eternal state of existence, hath taught us also that there is an everlasting fire prepared for the workers of iniquity,

and we must escape from the burden of our manifold offences before the resurrection of Christ can be to us any other than a savour of death everlasting!

Can, then, a pure and holy law of life be sufficient to save mankind from their sins? Verily, if a law could have been given which was competent to produce this effect, salvation would have been by the law of Moses! But it is evident that so long as we are ourselves carnal and sold unto sin, the more spiritual and pure any rule of life may be, the less likely we shall be to comply with it; and it is no less evident that where Moses and the prophets had failed to produce repentance, not all the terrours and hopes of an invisible world, no nor, if Christ is to be believed, the very spectacle of one returning from the dead would be sufficient, without some further help, to alarm the sinner from the errour of his ways, or to confirm the wavering soul when tossed on the storms of temptation.

But be this as it may, and even supposing us in time to come to avoid the crimes of our previous life, yet without some deliverance from the consequences of our former sins, this late repentance, though it might prevent our increasing their number, could not of itself rid us of apprehension. Repentance cannot make the past not to be; that we have not continued to act foolishly is of itself no reason for freeing us from those burdens which our folly has already incurred; and we must find out some atonement for sins past, as well as some pre-

servative against sins future, before the people of God can lay claim to the blessed hope of being saved from those sins whose guilt defiles, and whose consequences terrify them.

Nor is more needful to show the entire conformity of the Messiah's character and office, as understood by the great majority of His disciples, with the name by which He is best known among men, and by which the angels of the Most High proclaimed Him, who was clothed with our nature that He might reconcile us to God, who lived for our instruction, who died for our sins, who rose again for our justification, and who, from His Father's right hand, both intercedes for our infirmities, and sends forth His Spirit of holiness to prompt, and help, and sanctify our sincere, though imperfect services.

What then remains but that, thus mightily delivered, we should show forth in all our words and works a constant and becoming thankfulness; that, thus mightily aided, we should labour more abundantly in promoting our Master's praise; and that, united with the Godhead, as our nature is through Christ, we should the more aspire to emulate in diffusive goodness that God who maketh His sun to shine on the just and the unjust, and is kind to the unthankful and the evil.

The present season is one in which, by a natural and laudable association of ideas and feelings, the great majority of the Christian world have been accustomed to express their thankfulness for the

blessings bestowed on them, by imparting in a fuller measure than at other times the marks of affection and tenderness towards their fellow-creatures, by calling in, either literally or figuratively, their neighbours and brethren to rejoice with them, and by providing that, while they themselves exult in the bounty of the Almighty, the widow's heart should by their means be also made to sing for joy, and the blessings of him who was ready to perish, should mount up on their behalf an acceptable offering to their Maker. And here in Calcutta, in a city which, God be praised, may be honourably distinguished among the cities of the world for the extent and splendour of its public and private charities, the custom has long prevailed, in pursuance of which I yet further crave your attention, while recommending to your bounty the most ancient, and (I may be allowed to say), the most useful and necessary of all our humane institutions, that which alone administers to the pressing wants, alone alleviates the distress, the hunger, the nakedness, and the ignorance of the unhappy Europeans, and descendants of Europeans, who abound in the crowded dwellings and obscurer streets of this great and luxurious city. The necessity of such an institution is too obvious to require enforcement; but that necessity may be, perhaps, less known or less adverted to by those who are only occasional residents here, or who, immersed in public duties, or elevated above the access of petitioners, are but partially aware of the amount to which relief is

given, and the still greater degree in which it is needed.

Of the great body of Europeans of every nation and class of life who come out annually to seek their fortune in the flattering land of India, it is obvious that a small number only can hope to succeed in attaining even a livelihood; and that there are very many who are labouring at this moment under severe distress, and who are only kept here by the same poverty and want of friends which at once prevent their thriving, and prohibit their return. Nor is misfortune confined to these alone; in a country where speculation is so tempting, and where without speculation so little can be accomplished even by industry, not only are many humble but promising fortunes shipwrecked by undertakings which, if not strictly prudent, are under the circumstances of this country rendered almost necessary; but, where a prouder fabric of fortune and enterprise is shipwrecked, there are always many humbler barks whose fate depends on it, and whose industry and talent can rarely find another field till the assaults of famine, and the advances of disease, and the agony of ruined hopes and utter brokenheartedness have made them, even if another situation could be found, too often unfit to discharge its duties.

Nor are they misfortunè and disappointment alone which multiply the claimants on the vestry fund, nor are these the most necessitous or the most interesting claimants on our bounty. As in

no land under Heaven is death so sudden and so frequent, so in no land that I have ever heard of is the death of a parent, or a husband, attended with such utter and immediate ruin to those who depend on him, as with the description of persons of whom I speak, it ordinarily is in Calcutta. And when to these we add the multitude of orphans, or worse than orphans, whose existence and distress are alike the evidence and aggravation of their father's crimes; when we consider that not Calcutta alone, but the poor and populous colonies of Serampoor and Chinsura are included within the natural limit of our care; and that whatever be the amount of distress in all these districts, it is to Europeans alone, under ordinary circumstances, the sufferer can look for relief or sympathy; it cannot excite surprise that, large as the funds are which have passed through the hands of those who manage this good work, they are altogether insufficient to the number of claimants who besiege them. Yet if those funds should fail, to what quarter must the poor apply? Shall private and individual charity suffice to feed so great a multitude? Let those answer who are already wearied with a daily swarm of petitions, and who may be assured that those petitions would, without this institution, be augmented a hundred fold, and their doors be blocked up by suffering Christians in every hideous shape of hunger, disease, and nakedness, till their time and means were engrossed by giving to those whose cases they could not investigate, or their hearts

hardened against all by the apparent impossibility of relieving many. Nor can further arguments be required to prove the advantage of a common fund under the management of a few benevolent individuals, who are content to give up no small portion of their time to enquire into the cases submitted to them; and who, from their long familiarity with this work of mercy, are really enabled, at a smaller expense of time than would, under any other circumstances, be necessary, to ascertain with tolerable accuracy the character and condition of each individual claimant.

Of the labours of the vestry, and of the effects of those labours, though not myself a member, I have frequent occasion to hear something; and when I mention that I have known instances of females respectably born and educated, soliciting for the monthly allowance of paupers; that I have known strangers who must have perished in the street for lack of friends and shelter, had not the bounty of the institution intervened; and that the free school of Calcutta, which owes its chief support to this fund, has been, under God, the only means of rescuing from an early death, or a life which was worse than death, many thousand children of Christian parents who had either abandoned or could not educate or maintain them; when I state that in the vestry alms, no Christian in distress, of whatever nation or sect, is suffered to go unrelieved; and that in the free-school, though we naturally prefer the religious instructions of our own Church, yet

those instructions are forced on no child whose parents are of a different persuasion; that Armenians, and Greeks, and Romanists, and even Hindoos, may be seen in our classes, their prejudices respected, and their progress and comforts no less attended to than the children of our own people, I shall have said enough, I trust, to establish the claim of the institution, for which I now am pleading, to the support of every man who wishes well to his fellow-creatures, and who, without neglecting the prior claims of "the household of faith," is desirous, according to his power, "to do good to all men."

They were these claims, and claims like these, appreciated by a heart and head, than which few in the history of British India have been so warm and so cool, so ardent in the relief of distress and so calmly judicious in the choice of measures for alleviating it, which procured for this institution a more than common share of the attention and liberality of that great man whose life was cherished still, though his presence and counsels had been withdrawn from these colonies, not by his private friends alone, but by every well wisher to India; by every one who had learnt to honour private worth or public integrity and firmness; by the guests who had drawn delight and improvement from his conversation while they partook in his hospitality; and by the poor against whom his doors, his attention, his indulgence, and his purse had never been for an instant closed. His loss, the in-

stitution which I am now recommending, laments in common with almost every other religious or humane institution in the city; but it may be well to state, in order to intimate the extent of our misfortune in losing him, and to incite those who hear me to the exercise of a similar liberality, that accessible as Mr. Adam always was to the petitions and personal applications, of the frequency of which I have spoken, there was no charity whose claims he felt so strongly as this the eldest of all; that, ample as the donations were which the world saw affixed to his name, those donations fell considerably short of the sums which he contributed anonymously; and that even when he had left India without an idea of seeing it more, he had determined that, while life was spared him, his charities should linger here still. In him, in that other benevolent and virtuous statesman, whom, at a yet more recent date, the will of Providence has called to his reward; in others of less exalted rank, but of zeal not inferior for God's good cause, and the relief of their suffering fellow-creatures, whom since I last addressed you, a year of unusual mortality has swept from our social circles, the cause of charity has lost much; but to replace the void is not beyond the scope of our own increased exertions and the exertions of those fresh labourers who have, during that time, been added to the vineyard. Only let it be our endeavour to bestow alms as of the ability which God giveth, and that God may bless our bounty to its objects and to ourselves, let us devote it in humble prayer

at His Altar from whom we have received all things, and from whose grace only it cometh that we can render Him any true or laudable service.

To Him the Father of the fatherless, the Defender of the cause of the widow, to Him who heareth the cry of the destitute, and whose Son is not ashamed to call the poor His brethren, to Him, with that blessed Son, and the Spirit of bounty and love, be accounted all honour, praise, and glory!

SERMON XVI.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

[Preached in the Cathedral, Calcutta, Jan. 1, 1824.]

St. Luke ii. 21.

And when eight days were accomplished, for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus.

In reviewing those circumstances in the life of our Lord, which it is the custom of the Church to commemorate on the first day of every year, there are two observations which would seem to force themselves on our notice; the one personal and respecting Christ alone, the other of a more general character, and relating to the institution itself to which He thus, in great humility, became subject. The first is the apparent strangeness of the fact that at His earliest entrance into the world, the Son of God should be made liable to suffering; the other the authority and sanction which, from the analogy of the Jewish covenant, is afforded to the practice of the general Christian Church, in not denying baptism to persons of like tender years.

The first of these is a reflection of no inconsi-

derable importance, as it conduces, or should conduce, to our love and admiration of His goodness who, being throned above all created things, endured the elements of the world to save us; who, being born before all worlds, became for our sakes a suckling; whose entrance and exit into life were sprinkled alike with blood; and who, though Himself spotless and pure, thought it not unworthy of His nature or His character to fulfill even the most revolting forms of legal righteousness. It may teach, too, that even the forms and ceremonies of religion (particularly when those forms and ceremonies have received the sanction of the Most High) are neither to be neglected without abundant cause, nor dispensed with by a less authority than that which imposed them; but that, in these outward signs, an inward blessing dwells. And that He who Himself condescended to observe that law which was so soon to vanish away, will far less hold them guiltless who neglect or regard as trifling those rites which are to endure till He shall return again; of which the one was the legacy of His death, and the other the injunction of His triumph; His "do this in remembrance of me," and His "go ye baptize all nations[1]." The second is a remark of a more controversial, but of a scarcely less practical nature; it is a reflection which penetrates into the recesses of every family, and which blends with the earliest affection and the earliest duties which we can feel

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 25. St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

for, or extend to our offspring. And, in this region of India, it is a question the more seasonable, and the more obvious to our consideration from the numbers, the popularity and distinguished learning of those among our Christian brethren who have embraced a contrary opinion and practice. I am anxious, therefore, to offer (with as much brevity as the subject will admit, and I trust with as little violation of mutual charity as the infirmity of our nature suffers) a few of the many reasons which have induced the great body of Christians to apply the analogy of the ancient rite to that rite by which it was superseded, and to bring the first fruit of their infants' days to that merciful Saviour of all, who did not forbid the little children to come unto Him, and who, Himself, when a child, became partaker of the covenant of Israel.

That the intention and advantage of the federal rite of the Jews were in many, nay, in most particulars, very closely answerable to the intention and advantages of baptism, is an assertion which even a moderate acquaintance with the Old Testament and the writings of St. Paul might seem sufficient to convince us. In the first appointment of circumcision by the Almighty, it is represented as an expression of the faith of the person initiated in the power and promises of Jehovah. "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee." "Every man child among you shall be circumcised," "and it shall be a token

of the covenant betwixt me and you." "Abraham," saith St. Paul, "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised[1]." Nor was it of faith only in the promises of God that circumcision was expressive. It was expressive also of a controul over men's unruly appetites, a purification of the inward man from every foul and sordid affection, and a renunciation of the superfluities of the world for the service of that God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. And it is hard to deny, when reading some of the later prophets, that the same change in the inner man of which baptism is typical, was betokened by and confirmed in circumcision; that "the circumcision of the heart" must have been something very like in its import to our term of "regeneration;" and that to them who, under affliction and persecution, kept the law, "circumcision verily profiteth[2]" in the only way by which it could profit them, by purchasing the praise not of men but of God, and a participation in the benefits of those promises, the fulfilment of which they did not in life receive, but in which they died stedfastly believing.

Nor am I aware that any thing further or greater is expressed or received by the Christian in baptism than is attributed by St. Paul to circumcision in the Jew; a declaration of faith, an assurance of mercy, an admission into the privilege of God's

[1] Gen. xvii. 7. 10, 11. Rom. iv. 11. [2] Rom. ii. 25.

elect people upon earth, and a renunciation of those sins and vanities which unfit us for that Heaven whither our hopes are tending. Nor can any words, as I conceive, be devised, which, *mutatis mutandis*, more accurately express the obligations and the benefits of a truly Christian baptism, which more strongly depict the danger of holding the faith in unrighteousness, or of resting contented with an outward sign while the inward and spiritual grace is, in our heart, extinct and buried, than the caution that "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter [1]."

And here the question will naturally arise, "at what period of their lives were men conceived fit subjects for such engagements? how soon or how late were they called on by a public ceremony to receive a seal of that righteousness which was by faith, and whereby they, the Jews, were justified with faithful Abraham?" And when these enquirers learn that, at eight days' old, the infant Israelite was thus initiated; that the period of his initiation was thus fixed by God himself; and that at the same early age the Son of God began in this manner to fulfill the righteousness of the law, they may be led to ask, perhaps with some surprise, what Christians those can be who are insensible to the analogy of

[1] Rom. ii. 28, 29.

such a practice with that of infant baptism, who forbid us to dedicate our children to God at the same age when, by God's own appointment, the children of the Jews were dedicated; and when the Son of God Himself, in His character of a Jew, undertook the burden and laid claim to the promises which belonged to the seed of Abraham?

Let us examine the matter a little more closely. God is not mocked, neither is God a mocker of His creatures. He knows our misery too well to trifle with it, and He is as far from giving us the delusive comfort of a useless pageant, as He is from being Himself imposed upon by any pageantry of worthless ceremonies. But, if the baptism of children, as these suppose, is worthless and unmeaning, it is evident that the circumcision of children must fall under an equal censure. But this last is allowed, on all hands, to have been instituted by God Himself, and it will follow that the inconsistencies ascribed to the former practice must be more imaginary than real, and that we may well hope that God favourably alloweth this charitable work of ours in bringing these infants to His holy baptism.

I know it has been urged that circumcision was the seal of admission, not to spiritual, but temporal privileges, the possession of an earthly Canaan, the entrance into the visible sanctuary, the right of being numbered among the descendants of Abraham and the family of the future Messiah. I have already proved, I trust, that its privileges were not confined to these, and that its meaning, if regard

be had to some remarkable expressions both of the prophets and of St. Paul, was exceedingly more extensive and more solemn. But, even if we were to admit the allegation, how would this destroy the analogy? In the first place, it is well known (so well known, indeed, as to admit of no dispute among Christians) that the civil institutions and temporal privileges of the Jews had all, likewise, a typical and mysterious character; that they were shadows of good things to come, and representatives of that spiritual blessedness which we seek after and obtain by a due recourse to the sacrament of baptism. But from the type to the antitype the inference is fair and obvious, and if a child might, by submitting to a certain ceremony, be made partaker of the advantages of the one, it is, surely, too much to deny that a child being, in another and corresponding ceremony, dedicated by its parents to God, might not, through God's favour, become partaker of the privileges of the other. Is God's arm grown short under the Christian dispensation? Is His mercy chilled and narrowed? or is not the promise of the glorious Gospel given to us and to our children, and to our children's children, no less than was to the house of Israel the promise of those elemental and external blessings which, in comparison with our own, St. Paul is not afraid to designate as "beggarly[1]."

But let the privileges conferred by circumcision

[1] Gal. iv. 9.

have been of whatever kind they may, those privileges, it is plain, were conditional on the performance, through life, of certain duties. It was to the Israelite a seal of the faith which he had in the promises and power of the Almighty; it was a pledge on his part of obedience to Jehovah that he should have the Lord for his God, and none other. If he broke this covenant his privileges were forfeited; his circumcision became uncircumcision; he retained neither lot nor part in the federation of the tribes, or was liable only to the indignation and vengeance of their Heavenly Patron and Sovereign. It was in fact a contract, no less than baptism is now, between each individual Israelite and the Most High.

But if the child of Jewish parents were capable of entering into such a contract, who has forbidden, or who shall forbid the Christian infant from, in like manner, entering by his sureties into a similar solemn engagement? Who shall doubt that though the weakness and the tender age be alike in both, the merciful arms of a gracious Lord are as open in the one instance as the other?

And this presumption will gain yet further strength, if we recollect that circumcision is, by God Himself, called "a token of the covenant between Himself and Israel." Now for whose use and instruction was such a token intended? for which of the contracting parties? Did *God* require a memento of His own gracious purposes? Did *God* need that a bodily mark should be imposed on His

people, in order that He might know and distinguish them from the Gentiles among whom they were scattered? Or was it not rather designed for the instruction and comfort of the individual on whom it was affixed, to preserve in his mind the recollection of those hopes which were held out to his continued allegiance to God, those terrours which impended over his departure from the prescribed conditions? Was it not a pledge on the part of the parents and friends, that the infant whom they thus brought into treaty with the Most High should, in after years, be trained up by them in His faith and fear, and that Ishmael and Isaac should be taught, like their father Abraham, to know the Lord their God, and to look forward to his future Messiah? Or which of all these points is there which is not equally supplied to the child of Christian parents by his early dedication to our Great Master's service? He cannot, indeed, in the one any more than in the other instance, himself be at the moment made sensible of his new privileges, or the new obligations which are laid on him; but he has the prayers of his parents and of the Church, offered up in that manner and by that form to which the Almighty has promised a blessing. The ceremony which he undergoes is a pledge on the part of the Church that he shall be admitted to her external means of instruction; it is a petition addressed to the Almighty that those means of instruction may be blessed to his everlasting happiness; it is a solemn claim of that promise from

God, which He has made to all without exception, and which, be it remembered, is a promise of free grace and mercy only, to the fulfilment of which, whether infant or adult, the applicant is alike incapable of contributing any merits or strength of his own, and for which the infant, no less than the adult, has the plea of his natural weakness and his natural misery.

The promise, I repeat, is made to all, and the young as well as the old partake in it. "The child," according to the ancient prophet, was under the Gospel covenant, "to die an hundred years old[1]." And who shall deny that those infants of whom Christ himself declared that "of such was the kingdom of Heaven[2]," have, no less than the most aged saint, their proportional share in its happiness? But, can any enter Heaven without the sanctifying grace of Christ? Or, if infants are fit subjects for this grace, if they are really inheritors of the kingdom of God, and partakers of those spiritual influences in this life, without which our fleshly nature cannot see the Lord, then "can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we[3]?" Surely, the more we examine it the more reasonable does the practice appear, as a seal of past mercies, as an engagement to future duties, as an admission to the external means of grace which the Church can in this world supply, and as a solemn

[1] Isaiah lxv. 20. [2] St. Matt. xix. 14.

[3] Acts x. 47.

petition to the Almighty, that His blessing may render those outward means effectual! Suffer, then, the little children to come to Christ and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven!

In this short view of a very interesting and important question, I have not had the opportunity, and circumstanced as I am, at this moment, with regard to books of reference, I have hardly had the means of bringing forward, in the manner which it deserves, the vast body of authority and precedent which the Talmudists and the ancient Fathers supply, both as to the circumstances under which baptism was administered by the ancient Jews, for the Jews had also their baptism, and of the admission of infants in the earliest times of the Church, to the privileges and pledges of Christians. Enough, however, has, I trust, been said to show, that in thus admitting them, we neither act irrationally nor unscripturally; that we neither mock the Lord our God with an empty and unauthorised form, nor mock our helpless offspring with an unavailing remedy for their natural corruption and misery. I will only add that the wisdom of our Church, and the merciful appointment of our Maker have added, in the ceremony of a confirmation subsequent to baptism, the force of a personal engagement to the blessing of an early dedication, and that the regenerate by water may be renewed by the Holy Ghost, if they seek Him in earnest prayer, and at the hands of His appointed ministers.

One observation yet remains as to the occasion which calls us together. It has been the devout and commendable custom of our Indian Church to assemble on the annual return of this day, for the hearing of God's word and of prayer, less, perhaps, with reference to the particular event in our Saviour's history which the service of this day commemorates, than for the sake of offering our thanksgiving to Him who has protected us through another revolution of the sun, and of beginning the new year with an act of solemn prayer, and an offering of ourselves to His service. Such a custom it would most painfully grieve me to see neglected, or passing into oblivion; but that such a custom may be something more than an empty form, let me entreat you, my brethren, to make some part of this day a season of self-examination; of enquiry into the present state of your feelings towards God, and the tenour of your past conduct before Him; of making a solemn resolution for the amendment of your future life, and of earnest private prayer to Him, without whose help and guidance, even our best future resolutions will be as vain as those which have preceded them. The return of days like these are as milestones in our passage through the world, but they differ from such way-marks, inasmuch as they respect the past alone. They tell us how far we have advanced, but they leave uncertain how short a course we may yet have to travel. Yet one thing they teach us; that our journey cannot be long, that we have most of

us already passed too many stages to have many yet behind, while a retrospect of those which we have gone through, may assure us of the exceeding shortness even of those months and years, and tens of years, which, as we advance towards them, appear so interminable.

Under the mildest suns and the most temperate climates of earth, our course must be short, and its termination may, at any time, be immediate. But here, where the lamp of life, even under the most favourable circumstances, must burn so rapidly, surrounded at every step with deaths and diseases, and placed under the constant influence of the most aweful and destructive phenomena of nature, can we yet hope to prolong our days for ever? can we yet forget that God who only can defend us against the sun by day, the moon by night, the arrows of the sky, and the hand of the armed enemy? Here, if any where, in the midst of life we are in death! And of whom may we seek for succour, save of Thee, Oh Lord, who, for our sins, art justly displeased! Yet, Oh Lord most Holy, Oh Lord most Mighty, Oh Holy and Merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death! So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom! And, Oh Lord most Holy, Oh God most Mighty, Thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us not at our last hour for any pains of death to fall from Thee!

SERMON XVII.

EASTER DAY.

[Preached at Tanjore, March 26, 1826.]

Rev. i. 17, 18.

He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of Hell and of Death.

These were the gracious expressions of our glorified Lord to His faithful and most favoured disciple, when, in the prison of Patmos and amid the solitary devotions of a Christian Sabbath, the apostle St. John was visited by "One like unto the Son of Man." The features yet remained distinguishable to the eye of ancient friendship, of Him whom he had known on earth as the lowly and the poor, whose afflictions he had shared, whose journeyings he had followed, and who with His dying lips had commended to his filial care the desolate old age of His mother! But He was now arrayed in long and kingly robes, His girdle was of gold, His eyes gleamed as the fire, His limbs were bright as burning brass, His voice as deep and tuneable as the sound of many waters. Seven stars were in His

grasp; before His face a flaming sword went forth; and His countenance was as the sun when its light is strongest. "Fear not," He said, as His ancient follower sank down in terrour at His feet, "I am the first and the last, I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death."

In these few words are expressed or implied all the several and peculiar doctrines on which the Christian builds his hope of a life to come; and I have selected the passage for our devout consideration this day, because I know few other passages in Scripture which so concisely, so forcibly, and so majestically express the belief by which we are distinguished from the Jews, the Mussulmans, and the Heathen. The eternity of Christ, with which His Divinity is closely connected, is expressly stated in the opening member of the sentence. His death and resurrection are no less explicitly laid down in the assertion that He "liveth and was dead;" and the concluding proposition, that "He hath the keys of hell and of death," would be unintelligible on any other principle than that it is by His power, and through His merits only, that we are ourselves, in like manner, to burst the prison-house of the grave; that it is by His power, and through His merits only, that the resurrection thus obtained for us can be a subject of hope and thankfulness.

Each of these distinct topics would afford abundant and useful matter for a sermon; but it shall be my endeavour at present to point out, so far as

the time allows, how they materially confirm and illustrate each other, and more particularly connected with the blessed event which we are this day assembled to celebrate, how much both of probability, of reasonableness, of religious and moral consistency is derived, from a faith in the Divinity and atonement of our Lord, to the doctrine of His resurrection and our own.

It is certain that, unless the resurrection of Christ be true, His religion is itself a lie. This is the alternative expressly admitted by St. Paul; "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished [1]." The prophets had foretold, not only that the Messiah should die a bloody and painful death, but also that His soul should not remain in hell, neither should His holy person see corruption [2]. To this resurrection within three days Jesus had repeatedly appealed, as the fullest testimony of His divine commission, the crowning and consummating evidence of His religion. If, therefore, Jesus had not actually risen again, the conclusion must have followed, both that He had failed in one most essential and striking characteristic of the predicted Christ, whose character He assumed; and that, in expressly foretelling so remarkable an event, and foretelling it in vain, He had proved Himself, beyond all shadow of defence, to be either deceived or a deceiver. It

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 17, 18. [2] Psalm xiv. 10.

followed, that such who had grounded their hope of a future life on His promise, had but reared a baseless fabric; and that such as hoped for pardon of their sins in confidence of His intercession, had been treasuring up for themselves the bitterest disappointment, if there were indeed another world and a day of dreadful retribution. Accordingly it shall be my endeavour, in the first place, to lay before you, in the least possible compass, some few of those arguments which appear to me most convincing for the reality of that extraordinary event which the apostles witnessed to the world, and for the sincerity of those persons who so boldly and constantly proclaimed it.

It is on this latter foundation, indeed, that the faith of Christians reposes. The reality of Christ's resurrection we receive on their testimony alone, and a moment's consideration may convince us that it is their sincerity only which can be called in question. It was a point on which they could not be mistaken. If their account be true, it was no single nor transient visit which their crucified Master paid them after His resurrection. He was in their company, at short and uncertain intervals, during forty days; He ate and drank in their presence; He allowed them to examine His person and His wounds; He discoursed with them in His usual manner; and, when He departed from them at length, He departed in the broad light of day, ascending upwards before their eyes till the intervening clouds prevented them from observing His

further progress. To say that they were unlearned and superstitious persons, is to speak very widely from the purpose. Unlearned and credulous persons are as competent judges of the facts for which the apostles vouched, as the most skilful and cautious naturalist. It needs no physical knowledge to use the hands and eyes; it is not necessary that a man should be acquainted with the laws of refraction or electricity to enable him to swear to his having seen, in broad day-light, the person of a friend whom he had for three years together continually attended; and the circumstances under which our Lord exhibited Himself were such, if they are rightly described, as to render vain and impracticable all kinds of phantasmagoric illusion.

Let us see, then, what arguments the apostles were enabled to advance to convince mankind that they were not the preachers of a cunningly devised fable, and to gain credit for a fact so extraordinary as that a person, confessedly put to a public and shameful death, had resumed His life, had returned from His grave, and was at that time, under God, the invisible Governor of all things.

And here it must not be forgotten that the very improbability of this story, paradoxical as the assertion may seem, is, to a certain extent, a presumption of its truth. It is not like the invention of a religious cheat, or of a man or body of men (some of them, to judge from their writings of no inconsiderable talent and attainment) who were anxious, by a ready lie, to sustain the credit of a

ruined cause, and to save themselves from sinking into that insignificance from which the eloquence and renown of their Master had originally raised them. A less daring forgery might have been sufficient for such a purpose; nor is it likely that, had they been impostors, and been anxious in the name of Jesus to carry on the imposture which He began, they would have ventured on a tale so wild as that of His actual re-appearance in the body, when a pretended interview with His ghost would have better suited the prejudices both of their own countrymen, and of the Gentiles. Nor is this all, since, as neither their countrymen nor the Gentiles had any pre-disposition in favour of their story; since, on the other hand, the attributing such honour to a crucified man was the greatest stumbling-block which the new religion offered to the house of Israel; and since the bare mention of a resurrection from the dead was enough to excite the mockery of the Athenians, and to extort from Festus the exclamation that the preacher of such a doctrine was beside himself[1]; we might be, *à priori*, sure that such an assertion would never have been received as true by the many thousands who, on the apostle's preaching, did receive it, unless their testimony had been confirmed by some very remarkable proofs both of their sincerity, their sanity, and their divine commission.

We know ourselves, there is, perhaps, no country

[1] Acts xxvi. 24.

in the world where we have so good reason to know it as in India, we know that it is no easy matter even for the most popular talents and the most persevering zeal to persuade men into a new religion. We know that this very article of Christ's resurrection from the dead is uniformly, at first sight, by the heathen now, as by the heathen of old, regarded as folly and madness; and we may well perceive the argument of Origen to be founded in reason and probability, that those miracles must have been great indeed, those arguments must have been of a most convincing potency, which could have obtained, in the first instance, even hearers, far less believers for such a tale in the streets of Rome, of Athens, and of Alexandria. Accordingly, though beyond a doubt the apparent disinterestedness of the first teachers of Christianity, the absence of all worldly gains which might prompt them to the continuance of such an imposture, and the undaunted patience and constancy which, even in death itself, distinguished the witnesses of the resurrection, though all these must have had on their contemporaries, as they still have on ourselves, a powerful effect in gaining credit to their narration, they are the marvels still more which they wrought in Christ's name, and in attestation of His religion to which, in their writings, the apostles themselves appeal, and which they adduce as proofs of their having been actuated by the Spirit of God. And it is more remarkable still that neither of Christ nor His apostles are the miraculous actions denied

in those attacks on our faith which have come down to us from the earliest ages. The article of miracles was met by the Antichristian disputant with the allegation, not that the miracles were false, but that they might possibly be magical; and when driven from this strong hold, they appear to have had no excuse nor evasion but the pretence that, in their own temples, wonders of the same kind were not unknown, and an attempt to counterbalance the miracles of Peter and of John, by the tales of Vespasian with his blind man, and Apollonius of Tyana with his fountain genii.

The resurrection, then, of our Lord, as it stands on the testimony of the apostles, is confirmed by the impossibility that they could be themselves deceived; by the absence of any adequate motive which could induce them to impose on others; by the simplicity of their lives, their constancy in death, and the miraculous powers which, in the greatest and least credulous cities of the Roman world, obtained them hosts of auditors and converts. But one objection will yet remain both to the fact which they proclaimed, and to the miraculous facts by which they chiefly strengthened their testimony; an objection which has more influence among men than, I believe, is generally suspected, and which is at the bottom of much of that practical or professed infidelity which, in the present day, and in our native land, so frequently surprises and shocks us; I mean the doctrine of Hume, that no evidence can establish a miracle, inasmuch as

there is more probability that the witnesses should deceive or be deceived, than that the ordinary laws of nature should be transgressed by the Almighty.

In this argument it is apparent that there is more than one *petitio principii.* The sophist assumes the existence of certain definite laws by which nature is tied; (which code, nevertheless, if he had been called to produce, it would have been very easy to anticipate his perplexity). He assumes that supposing such laws to exist, what we call miracles are breaches of them, whereas, for all he knew or could know, such visible interpositions of a superior intelligence may be, as indeed they are represented in Scripture, foreseen and necessary events in the great work of God's Providence, and no less constituent parts of a regular system than the movements of the comet, the hurricane, or the earthquake. But above all, he forgets that, if a sufficient reason can be assigned, the visible interference of the Maker of the world becomes no more than might be reasonably expected from His usual and provident care of His creatures; while the discovery and attestation of truths infinitely important to mankind, can scarcely be denied to be a reason which might make a display of Almighty power expedient and natural.

And here it is that the great mystery of Christian redemption comes forward with irresistible force to overturn the sceptic's argument, and to convince every candid reasoner that no ordinary rules of probability will apply, where the analogy

is so completely broken and dissolved by the greatness of the interests concerned, and the dignity of the persons implicated. The resuscitation of a corpse, if it were alleged to have taken place without any reason at all, or for a reason of minor expediency, might demand, indeed, a rigid enquiry into its circumstances, and a suspension of our belief, even if we failed to detect imposture. It is one of the many reasons which persuade me to withhold my faith from the pretended miracles of the Romish Church, that the interests of a convent, the honour of a shrine, nay the truth or falsehood of those minor differences, which have for so many ages disturbed the peace of those who acknowledge the same Creator and Redeemer, do not appear to me such sufficient grounds of miraculous interposition, as to induce me to expect that God would make bare His arm, or that the thunders of Heaven would muster in such a quarrel. And if the Socinian hypothesis with regard to Christianity were true ; if Christ had been, indeed, a mere man of men, possessed of no further dignity than a prophetic commission from on high, and with no more aweful secret to disclose than that future life after death, which the majority of mankind believed already, I might, perhaps, have wondered at the strange prodigality of miracles with which His short continuance on earth was adorned and illustrated. I might have doubted the fitness of darkening the sun, because an innocent man was brought to an untimely end, and have

apprehended that it was hardly necessary to bring back our Teacher from the grave to establish, by that greatest of prodigies, the truth of the doctrine which He had delivered. But when I learn that the seeming man of sorrows was actually an incarnation of the Deity, I can understand at once, and without difficulty, the reason and fitness that so many and so mighty works should have shown forth themselves in Him. When I learn that His death was the ransom of a guilty world, I can appreciate the sympathy which made the inanimate creation tremble, which obscured the face of day, and made the dead burst untimely from the womb of their sepulchres.

I cease to wonder at His return from the grave, when I know that it was "impossible that He could be holden of it," that "He had power to lay down His life and power to take it up again," and that He who was, for a time, "obedient to the death on the cross," had life in Himself co-eternal with the eternal Father. I cease to wonder at the high exaltation to God's right hand, which He who "was found in fashion as a man," has attained to, when I know that the glory which adorns Him now, is but the same with that which He had before the world was[1]; but my hope is increased, and my deep thankfulness ten thousand fold augmented, when assured that it was the First and the Last who condescended to die for me; that

[1] Acts ii. 24. St. John x. 18. Phil. ii. 8.

He is faithful who hath promised to send the Holy Ghost to quicken us to a perpetual remembrance; and that the keys of death and hell are in the merciful and mighty hands of Him who hath poured out His blood to save us from the one, and hath made the other the gate of immortality!

ADDRESS ON CONFIRMATION.

[Delivered at Trichinopoly, April 3, 1826.]

Dearly beloved in the Lord!

You have been engaged this day in one of the most aweful and important transactions in which a created being can bear a part; the solemn renewal of your former covenant with your Maker, and the no less solemn claim of the stipulated mercies of that great Creator towards yourselves. In Christ's name you have drawn near to the Most High to tender to His service, in the terms of your baptismal engagement, the bodies which He has framed, the lives which He has given, the immortal souls which, through His Son, He has redeemed from misery unspeakable.

For God's acceptance of these offered services; for the spiritual strength which only can enable you to render them; for the merciful indulgence which, even when they are most diligently performed, they must still need at God's hand; and for the unbounded and eternal reward which His free bounty has promised to even the weakest efforts

to please Him, when made in His Son's name, you have pleaded the merits of that blessed Son, by the confession of your faith in Him, and by the solemn prayer which we offered up together to the Throne of Grace, for the gift of the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

In reliance on these merits and on the precious promises of our Redeemer, I, lastly, as His servant and in His name, have prayed for you that your faith fail not. In His name and as His servant, and in imitation of His holy apostles, I have laid my hands on you and blessed you, as a sure token that our prayers would not return empty from the Lord of life, but that ye might receive the Holy Ghost whom ye had desired, and might partake henceforward, in a larger measure and by a daily increase, of that Heavenly grace which was, in part, bestowed on you in baptism.

And I doubt not, that so many of you as with faith unfeigned and fitting preparation of heart, have repaired to this holy ordinance, have been as truly and effectually, though not so conspicuously, sharers in that unspeakable gift whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption, as when the Heaven was opened over the congregations of the primitive Church, and He whose temples we are, came down in cloven flames, and hovered over the heads of His servants.

I doubt it not, because I dare not doubt the strength of prayer, and the promise of the Son of God, that His Father and ours, (for, by the spirit of adoption,

we have permission to call Him so) that His Heavenly Father and ours will not refuse the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him! I doubt it not, because I dare not doubt the efficacy of an apostolic injunction, or that the petitions which we offer in the manner which those dearest to God enjoined and practised, will be acceptable with God and with His Son; and to us, as to those from whom we have received them, be the fountain and pledge of Heavenly strength and blessing. I doubt it not, because I dare not doubt the last words of our Lord upon earth, when He sent forth His ministers with a like commission to that which He had Himself received of His Father, and when, though foreseeing, as what did He not foresee, the lamentable degeneracy of those who should bear His name, He promised, nevertheless, to His Church, His invisible protection and presence till the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdom of the Lamb, and this same Jesus, which was then taken up from us into Heaven, should so come in like manner as He was seen going into Heaven.

Oh Master, Oh Saviour, Oh Judge and King, Oh God faithful and true! Thy word is sure, though our sinful eyes may not witness its fulfilment! Surely Thou art in this place and in every place where thine ordinances are reverenced, and Thy name is duly called on! Thy treasures are in earthen vessels, but they are Thy treasures still! Though prophecies may fail and tongues may cease, Thy truth remains the same; and

though prophecies have failed and tongues have ceased, and though the Heaven and the earth are grown old and ready to vanish away, yet it is impossible but that when two or three are gathered together in Thy name, Thou also shouldst be in the midst of them! So continue with us Lord evermore, and let the Spirit, the Angel of Thy presence, be with us all our days, even as He hath this day been at hand to help, to deliver and to sanctify all who came to receive Him.

In assurance, then, my brethren, that our prayers have not been in vain, and that an effectual power to become the sons of God has been, even now, according to Christ's holy promise, communicated to those who sought it faithfully, it is my duty to call on you to give hearty and humble thanks to the Father and Giver of all good things, to the Son whose blood has bought for us these spiritual treasures, and to that Good Spirit who hath not disdained to dwell with men, and of whose indwelling and inspiration it cometh that we can either think or do such things as please Him. And that your hearts may be better fitted to retain this Heavenly guest, and that you may not, by a relapse into sin, resist and grieve the Holy Ghost as Israel did of old, and so increase your damnation by erring against a greater light, and flinging away a greater mercy, receive a few plain instructions by way of caution for the management of your hearts, and the improvement of that time and

those opportunities of His service, which God may hereafter vouchsafe to you.

I will not do so much injustice to the well-known zeal and ability of your spiritual instructors, on the present occasion; I will not do so much injustice to the seriousness of deportment and apparent earnestness of prayer, which I have, with pleasure, remarked in most of you, as to doubt that you have been duly taught the nature and necessity of those baptismal engagements which you have now renewed; or that you are really sincere in the desire which you have expressed to be enabled to serve and please your God hereafter. Nor need I do more than recall to your recollections that truth, which is implied and acknowledged in the whole of this solemn ceremony, that this power to serve and please God is given us by His Spirit only; that in ourselves, that is in our flesh, there dwelleth no good thing; and that we are utterly unequal to strive with the many temptations which surround us, unless a Greater and Mightier than we vouchsafes to go forth with us to battle. The promise of this visitation and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, has, we trust, been now fulfilled to us; and it remains to enquire in what manner our hearts may best entertain their Heavenly Inhabitant, and how we may most surely keep, enjoy, and profit by the inestimable privileges to which we are become entitled, the favour, the fellowship, the help, and comfort of the Most High.

Of the things most conducive and requisite to this desirable end, the first is, evidently, a firm and lively faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the redemption which He has wrought for us. That you are, at present, actuated by such a faith, that you are persuaded that the things contained in the Gospel are true, and that relying on their truth, you have come hither to ask a blessing, I should grieve if I were not persuaded. But be it borne in mind that a faith which is to save us must be in our recollection as well as in our knowledge; that it must be positively as well as potentially in our minds; that we cannot be said to believe in the God of whom we are not thinking, inasmuch as faith necessarily implies thought exercised upon an unseen object. And this may show the manner in which our faith may fail, and fail most ruinously for ourselves, without our ever actually entertaining a doubt of the truth of those things in which we have been instructed, inasmuch as if we do not believe them, or, which amounts to the same thing, do not think of them when the time of temptation arrives, it is of very little use that in Church, or when by some similar circumstance they are brought back to our memory, we again receive them with unabated conviction. Accordingly, not only the absolutely wicked are turned into hell, but the people who forget God lie under the same aweful menace[1]. And we have the authority of God's

[1] Psalm ix. 17.

holy word for maintaining that all the errours, all the superstition, all the hateful and hideous idolatry which the world has seen, arose from this single source, inasmuch as because men did not like to retain God in their thoughts, He gave them up to a strong delusion that they should believe a lie! So necessary is it by daily recollections of God, by daily study of the Holy Scriptures, and by a frequent reference to those works of devotion and instruction which the Church supplies, to avoid this dangerous and deadly downfall, and to keep the blessed Trinity in our minds, if we would have God to dwell in our hearts for ever.

The next thing requisite to a constant faith in God is a total dependance on Him, through the merits of His Son. This is, indeed, implied in a right faith, but it is a particular part of our faith which many are apt to feel and cherish but imperfectly. By a total dependance on God I mean a perfect sense of our own weakness; an entire renunciation of our own merits; a childlike leaning on the hand and help of the Most High, which claims to receive nothing but from free mercy, and hopes to perform nothing but in His name and by His power alone. So long as we resolve in our own strength, our resolutions will be worse than idle; so long as we are not daily and continually sensible of our own utter weakness, God will not help us and our prayers will be rendered vain.

Be careful, then, to accustom yourselves to this lowliness of heart; and that you may feel your own

weakness the more readily as it respects your Maker, be the more careful to bear yourself humbly and meekly towards those who are your fellow-sinners and fellow-servants. If we love not our brother whom we have seen, we know who has told us that we cannot love God whom we have not seen; and he, in like manner, who indulges himself in haughtiness towards those with whom he dwells, will seldom, if ever, be able to feel sufficient meekness towards Him who is visible by the eye of faith alone.

A third and a still more important instrument in preparing our hearts for the reception of the Holy Ghost, is a habit of prayer. "Ask and ye shall have," "Seek and ye shall find," is the constant language of Scripture[1]. Without asking we shall not obtain; without continuing to ask, what we have obtained will not be prolonged to us. Your hearts, as we trust, are now the temple of the Holy Ghost. But a temple is a house of prayer; and if we omit to serve the Deity we cannot hope that He will continue in His shrine.

But woe be to us, then, when He, the Spirit of God, forsakes us! Woe be to our wretched souls when that voice is heard concerning them, which, when the measure of Israel's guilt was full, in the dead of night resounded through the courts of their sanctuary, "Let us depart hence," as from our polluted dwelling. The Spirit of God, I re-

[1] St. Matt. vii. 7.

peat, will not always strive with man; and if His accepted time is despised or suffered to pass by unimproved, the time may come in the which we shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and it shall not be shown unto us[1]!

A neglect of prayer, then, of morning and evening prayer, (I name these times because a short prayer, at least, is then in every body's power, and because no times are so proper, none so natural for devotion as the moments at which we are about to commit ourselves to a temporary death, or at which we have just undergone a lively image of the resurrection,) a neglect of morning and evening prayer, as it is always one of the earliest symptoms of our falling away from God, so it is the certain means of estranging ourselves entirely from Him, and provoking Him to give us up to still farther guilt, and to withdraw from us, it may be, even the opportunity and power of repentance.

But even this daily prayer will of itself be insufficient, unless we honour the Lord our God in public as well as in private, and on those solemn and stated Sabbaths above all, which the practice of the whole Church, the authority of the inspired apostles, the sanction of the Lord Jesus Himself, when risen from the dead, and after His reception into glory, have combined to consecrate from worldly and ordinary purposes to the examination of our hearts, the improvement of our minds, the rest of

[1] St. Luke xvii. 22.

those who toil for us, and a union with our brethren and fellow-servants in a more solemn and conspicuous piety. I am but too well aware of the difficulties which, in India, under many circumstances of life, oppose themselves to the due observation of Sunday. I know but too well the influence exerted by the surrounding heathen; I know but too well the necessities which are sometimes felt, but oftener fancied, for invading the sanctity and repose of an institution which, even if it were a political institution only, would, from its wisdom and mercy, well deserve the imitation of every lawgiver, and the observation of every friend to mankind. I know but too well that the habits of the country are against us, and that of some of those who hear me, the time may really not be altogether at their own disposal. But in India there are many hours in every day which are at the disposal of every one of us. These at least, if no more can be obtained, let the servant, the soldier, and the mariner hallow from each succeeding Sunday to the service of Him who only can prosper or forgive his labours; and let all others, even the busiest, but make the trial, and they will find, or I am greatly mistaken, that they need leave no lawful business undone by resting one day in seven; and that it is amusement after all, not duty, which leaves them no time to spare for private and public devotion.

Sir Matthew Hale, himself no less a rare model of successful diligence in a laborious profession, than of exalted talents and distinguished attach-

ment to the liberties of his country, has left on record that, in the course of a long and active life, he never failed to find that his weekly business had been best and most prosperously performed when he had begun the week by a more than usually careful observation of the Lord's day. Under the safeguard of his authority I shall hardly be suspected of superstition; and I confess, it seems to me a thing very far from incredible or unlikely, that our labours may indeed be then most prosperous, when our minds have been refreshed and strengthened by one day devoted to the most composing and encouraging of all meditations; and that we may look, without presumption, for an additional blessing from the Lord on those lawful pursuits which we have not suffered to interfere with His service.

One instrument of blessing yet remains, the mightiest of all, and that to which the ceremony you have now undergone is a fitting and necessary introduction; the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. Of the value of this institution as a means of grace; of its natural, I had almost said, its necessary effect on the human heart, to compose, to purify and strengthen it; of the refreshment which our souls derive from duly receiving it, and of the evident peril of neglecting one of the last and most solemn, as well as most easy and delightful commands which He who died for us has left us, I need not now speak, as I trust the instructions which you have received are still fresh

in your memory. One thing, however, I would earnestly press upon you all, that your attendance on the table of the Lord be not only frequent hereafter, but that your first visit to it be delayed as short a time as possible. That is a strange reluctance, and one for which it is by no means easy to account on any rational or human motives, which keeps back young persons, on the pretext of their youth, from this comfortable and blessed ordinance; as if their being young and comparatively innocent were a reason which could make their prayers less acceptable to God, or as if the strength of their passions and the temptations to which they are exposed, were not an additional and most forcible reason for their seeking after spiritual help in that way which is, of all others, the most prevailing. But, let me entreat you, my young friends, to consider earnestly with yourselves that there is no text in Scripture which confines the necessity of the rite in question to those who are advanced in life, or sinking down with weakness and infirmity; that youth has no privilege, any more than age, which exempts it from sudden death; that if we are unfit to receive the Sacrament, we must be still more unfit to die and stand before the judgement seat of the Almighty; and that, however imperfect our lives may be now, yet if we never employ the helps which God in His bounty has furnished, we cannot reasonably hope that they will ever become better! You fear your own unworthiness. And I know you to be most unworthy, unworthy so much

as to gather up the crumbs under the Lord's table. But it is not in your own worthiness that you are invited thither, but in the worthiness of Christ, in the mercy of God, and in the marriage garment which His grace will supply to all that do not wilfully reject it. You fear your own weakness, and I know you to be most weak. I know that you are unable of yourselves to do even the least part of those things to which you stand engaged. I know that your present good resolutions, if left to themselves, will vanish like a morning dream; and therefore it is that I so earnestly call on you to seek for spiritual strength where best it may be found, and to renew these gracious impressions, both speedily and often, in the temple of the Lord, and kneeling on the footstep of His Altar! Let, then, the time which intervenes between the present day and the next opportunity of receiving the Sacrament in your respective Churches, be to you a time of frequent serious thought, of prayer, and study of the Scriptures; and let not, I beseech you, that first opportunity pass away without returning to the Mercy Seat of God, without renewing the free-will offerings of yourselves, your souls and bodies, to His holy will and pleasure, and intreating the continuance and increase of the grace and comfort which has been now held out to you.

Finally, holy brethren! partakers of the spiritual gift! Let this day be to you a day remembered much and often thought upon in the stillness of the night, in the languor of noon, in the loneliness

and inactivity of an eastern journey, whenever your soul retires upon itself, and finds food in the recollection of past scenes and past impressions. Bind the promises which you have made, and the hopes which have been held out to you as a crown on your heads, and as a bracelet on your arms, that they may never pass from your recollection, but occur to you then when all holy recollections are most needed, when the world menaces or the flesh entices, or when the tempter whispers dark things in your souls, and seeks to draw you from that strength in which only you can stand safely. Write down this day as a date to be much observed, as a new æra in your spiritual existence, in some one or more of those books of devotion which you have studied, or with which, on asking for them, you will be supplied most cheerfully. And remember, above all, that the great and proper use of days like this is, not to sanction or counterbalance your sins, but to enable you to leave off sinning; that for this cause we call on you to pray; for this cause to be baptized; for this cause to frequent the Church; for this cause to receive the Holy Ghost; for this cause to become partakers in the Communion, that your hearts may be changed and renewed from the corruption of a fallen to the holiness of a Heavenly condition; that you may be purified to Christ, a peculiar people zealous of good works; that you may imitate, so far as He enables you, His blameless life in whatever sphere of action His Providence may have allotted you, and

lay down at length your tranquil heads in death in the sure and certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life, beloved and regretted by those who have witnessed your demeanour on earth, and welcomed by those angels who shall then convey your souls to the land of rest and thankfulness! And now farewell! depart in the faith and favour of the Lord; and if what you have learned and heard this day has been so far blessed as to produce a serious and lasting effect on you, let me entreat you to remember sometimes in your prayers those ministers of Christ who now have laboured for your instruction, that we who have preached to you may not ourselves be cast away, but that it may be given to us also to walk in this life present according to the words of the Gospel which we have received of our Lord, and to rejoice hereafter with you the children of our care, in that land where the weary shall find repose, and the wicked cease from troubling; where we shall behold God as He is, and be ourselves made like unto God in innocence, and happiness, and immortality!

THE END.

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